Sylva Britannica;

OR

PORTRAITS OF FOREST TREES

New Forest. Vide page

Hail, old patrician trees!

COWLEY.

——— arched walks of twilight groves
And shadows brown, that Sylvan loves,
Of pine, or monumental oak.

MILTON.

Sylva Britannica;

OR,

PORTRAITS OF FOREST TREES,

DISTINGUISHED FOR THEIR

ANTIQUITY, MAGNITUDE, OR BEAUTY.

DRAWN FROM NATURE

BY

JACOB GEORGE STRUTT,

AUTHOR OF "DELICIÆ SYLVARUM," &c.

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TO HIS GRACE

THE DUKE OF BEDFORD.

My Lord Duke,

When I first entreated Your Grace's permission to dedicate to the Representative of the House of Russell the following Portraits of Forest Trees, I was influenced by an irresistible association in my own mind between the stedfastness and independence universally attributed to the "Lord of the Woods, the long-surviving Oak," and the same characteristics which have for ages past distinguished the noble family of Bedford; a family, whose name will be always venerated in the annals of English History, as the champions of lawful right and well-regulated liberty; and whose public virtues are combined in the descendant whom I have now the honour to address, with "all the mild charities of private life," to which, for the happiness of those by whom he is surrounded, it is his pleasure chiefly to devote himself.

I have only to add, that among the numerous gratifications I have derived from my work, favoured as it has been, during its progress, with marks of public approbation far exceeding any that my hopes had anticipated, the greatest is the opportunity afforded me, by its completion, of testifying to the world the pride and gratitude with which I have the honour to subscribe myself,

My Lord Duke,

Your Grace's Most Obedient

and Devoted Servant,

JACOB GEORGE STRUTT.

PREFACE.

On the completion of the Sylva Britannica in the Folio Edition, the Author was intreated by several highly esteemed friends to add a Supplement to the work, for the purpose of including various specimens of Trees which the original limits did not admit of containing. But however flattering those solicitations might be, his unwillingness to incur the slightest appearance of trespassing on the liberality of his Subscribers, formed an insuperable bar to his compliance with them. To the wish, however, which has been very frequently expressed, that the work should be brought out anew, in a form of which neither the size nor expense should place it beyond general circulation, not the most fastidious delicacy could raise a scruple. The Author, therefore, trusts that the present, comparatively small, Edition, will afford a gratification similar to that which a lover of art derives from comparing a finished miniature with the same subject in full size—fidelity of representation being alike

adhered to in both instances. In the present arrangement of the plates, and consequently of the letter-press, some deviation has been made from the original plan; which, as the work came out in numbers, aimed at giving a variety of subjects in each, in order to avoid any appearance of monotony; but as in the present form the whole is brought before the eye at once, it has been deemed advisable to place all the specimens of each description of tree together, as thereby enabling a more accurate idea to be formed of their comparative sizes and characteristics. In all other respects, it is hoped that every thing which may wear the aspect of alteration, will be better explained by the term addition or amendment.

Hammersmith, May 25, 1830.

INTRODUCTION.

AMONG all the varied productions with which Nature has adorned the surface of the earth, none awakens our sympathies, or interests our imagination, so powerfully as those venerable trees which seem to have stood the lapse of ages—silent witnesses of the successive generations of man, to whose destiny they bear so touching a resemblance, alike in their budding, their prime, and their decay.

Hence, in all ages, the earliest dawn of civilization has been marked by a reverence of woods and groves: devotion has fled to their recesses for the performance of her most solemn rites; princes have chosen the embowering shade of some wide-spreading tree, under which to receive the deputations of the neighbouring "great ones of the earth;" and angels themselves, it is recorded, have not disdained to deliver their celestial messages beneath the same verdant canopy. To sit under the shadow of his own fig-tree, and drink of the fruit of his own vine, is the reward promised, in Holy Writ, to the righteous man; and the gratification arising from the sight of a favoured and long-remembered tree, is one enjoyed in common by the peer, whom it reminds, as its branches

wave over his head, whilst wandering in his hereditary domains, of the illustrious ancestors who may have seen it planted; and by the peasant who recalls, as he looks on it in his way to his daily labours, the sports of his infancy round its venerable trunk, and regards it at once as his chronicler and land-mark.

To perpetuate the remembrance and preserve the characteristics of some of these objects, in themselves so interesting, is the design of the SYLVA BRITANNICA: in the descriptions, therefore, which accompany the plates, it will be found, that although the minutiæ of scientific detail and botanical definitions are omitted, as unnecessary, and even misplaced, in a work professing to be chiefly of a pictorial description, every circumstance of local connexion, or traditional interest, has been carefully attended to; and the Author will be sufficiently gratified, should his performance impart to the minds of those who may favour it with their attention, even a small portion of the pleasure which he has himself experienced, whilst haunting the woods and forests, intent on delineating those varieties and peculiarities of their noblest productions, which he has endeavoured to transfer to the following representations; with as much of the spirit of Nature as he could command, and with all the truth which minute remark and faithful imitation may, he hopes, lay claim to, without hazarding the imputation of undue presumption.

THE OAK.

Stabat in his ingens annoso robore quercus;
Una nemus. OVID.

In aged majesty a mighty Oak
Towers o'er the subject trees, itself a grove.

THE OAK, admirable alike for its beauty and utility, has ever been distinguished as the glory of the forest; over all the trees of which it may be considered to reign with undisputed sway, both in importance and longevity. The earliest mention that is made of this tree is in Holy Writ: That ancient of days the "Oak of Mamre," under which Abraham sat in the heat of the day, and which, we are told, "remained an object of veneration even in the time of Constantine." We are informed also that Saul was buried beneath the Oak in the valley of Jabesh—a more desirable mausoleum than the kings of Egypt afterwards raised for themselves in their pyramids.

The Oak was held sacred by the Greeks, the Romans, the Gauls, and the Britons. Among the

Romans, it was dedicated to Jupiter; among the ancient Britons, its consecrated shade was devoted to the most solemn ceremonies of the Druids; and scarcely is it held in less veneration by their descendants, who find all the interest of which it may be despoiled by the passing away of the superstitions connected with it in former ages, revived in those present to them, by the ideas of British power, and British independence, inseparably associated with the image of the British Oak in the minds of Englishmen; who see in every acorn that drops from its branching arms,

> Those sapling Oaks which at Britannia's call
> May heave their trunks mature into the main,
> And float the bulwarks of her liberty.
>
> MASON.

In proportion as the Oak is valued above all other trees, so is the English Oak esteemed above that of any other country, for its particular characteristics of hardness and toughness; qualities which so peculiarly fit it to be the "father of ships," and which are thus admirably expressed in two epithets by that great poet, to whom the book of Nature, and of the human heart, seemed alike laid open.

> Thou rather with thy sharp and sulph'rous bolt,
> Splitt'st the *unwedgeable* and *gnarled* Oak,
> Than the soft myrtle.
>
> SHAKSPEARE.

The Oak is to be found in all soils; its growth, however, greatly depends on the nature of that wherein it may be planted; for though the hardiness of its infancy is such as to render choice or care apparently unnecessary, yet as it advances towards maturity, the depth and extent to which it strikes its roots, make much of both its magnitude and vigour depend on the congenial and uninterrupted field it may find for its powers. That it vegetates very rapidly under favorable circumstances, may be seen in the instance adduced by Gilpin, of an acorn which was sown at Beckett, the seat of Lord Barrington, on the day of his lordship's birth in 1717, and which, in November 1790, contained ninety-five feet of timber, and was more than eight feet in girth, at five feet from the ground. It is stated by Mr. South, in his ingenious essay on the Age and Growth of Trees, that an oak of sixty years standing will, in twenty-four years, double its contents of timber; a piece of information which may often check the progress of the axe that would otherwise be prematurely hurled at the fair heads of the infant hamadryads, by the reckless hand of avarice, a passion very apt, like "vaulting ambition," to "o'erleap itself," in its eager anticipation of emolument. An Irish writer on planting, mentions, with much regret, his being an eye-witness to the fall of nearly two hundred acres of beautiful thriving oaks in a romantic val-

ley in Wicklow, three times within the space of twenty-four years; the produce of each sale never exceeding one hundred pounds, and one amounting only to fifty pounds; when, had the same wood been preserved for an equal number of years, it would have produced, at the very lowest valuation, six thousand pounds instead of fifty. It is when standing singly that the natural character of trees is seen: that of the Oak is rather to extend its arms, than elevate its head; and in this situation its timber is more valuable than when it is in groups; being more compact and firm, better bent, and every way more adapted for ship-building, the most precious of all its purposes; though even in this respect the ingenuity of modern art supplies the operations of nature, and the discovery of warping timber by steam for the knees and other bent timbers of vessels renders its growth a matter of less importance than it would otherwise be: the tall Oaks are certainly more profitable for beams and planking; and in sheltered groups they will reach an elevation of eighty or a hundred feet before they begin to decay. Mr. Rooke mentions one in Welbeck Park, known by the name of "the Duke's Walking-Stick," since blown down, which was one hundred and eleven feet six inches in height, being higher than the roof of Westminster Abbey. It is not, however, from these Goliahs of the forest that the painter would draw his *beau ideal* of sylvan forms, any more than from similar

proportions in the human race. There are so many points of view in which remarkable and well-known trees are interesting, either for their beauty in their prime, their venerableness in their decay, or the associations connected with them, as linked with historical recollections, that it is matter of regret to think how few of those which are chronicled as deserving of admiration have been secured to remembrance by the pencil. Who can hear of Alfred's Oak, or Chaucer's Oak, without regretting that not even an outline of them is in existence, for fancy to fill up, with the enthusiasm their names inspire? But independently of all other consideration, trees afford such delightful individuality, joined with such exquisite variety of character, and bring with them so many charming and hallowed associations of liberty and peace, of rural enjoyment or contemplative solitude, of the sports of childhood or the meditations of old-age,—in short, of all that can refresh or exalt the soul,—that it is wonderful they have not hitherto been more decided objects of interest to the painter and the amateur, than merely what may arise from their introduction, rather as accidents in pictorial delineation, than as pictures in themselves: yet what can afford more delightful contrast in landscape than the giant strength of the Oak, with the flexile elegance of the ash; the stately tranquillity of the elm, with the tremulous lightness of the poplar; the bright and varied foliage

of the beech, or sycamore, with the funereal majesty of the cedar or the yew; all differing in form and character, as in colour:

> "No tree in all the grove but has its charms,
> And each its charm peculiar."
>
> COWPER.

To a casual observer it may appear, that the view of one tree is much like the view of another; and that a forest itself is more calculated to strike the imagination, by the greatness of its aggregate, than to interest it by the variety of its detail; but it is very different with the ardent contemplatist of Nature; with him, as is well observed by St. Pierre, himself an unwearied admirer of her charms, "every tree has its individual character, and every group its harmony." Every winding branch, and every shooting stem, has a charm for him; and he is interested throughout each stage of the existence of these wonderful vegetable structures, from the tender sapling to the leafless withered trunk.

THE GREAT OAK OF PANSHANGER

is a fine specimen of the Oak in its prime. The epithet of Great was attached to it more than a century ago; it appears, however, even now to have scarcely reached its meridian: the waving lightness

The Great Oak at Farnhanger.

of its feathered branches, dipping down, towards its stem, to the very ground, the straightness of its trunk and the redundancy of its foliage, all give it a character opposite to that of antiquity; and fit it for the cultivated and sequestered pleasure-grounds which form part of the domain of Earl Cowper, at Panshanger, in Hertfordshire; where it stands surrounded with evergreens and lighter shrubs, of which it seems at once the guardian and the pride. It is nineteen feet in circumference at three feet from the ground, and contains one thousand feet of timber. On looking at an object at once so graceful and so noble, raising its green head towards the skies, rejoicing in the sun-shine, and imbibing the breath of Heaven at every pore, we cannot but feel equal wonder and admiration when we consider the tininess of its origin, the slenderness of its infant state, and the daily unfolding powers of its imperceptible, yet rapid, progress. "So it is," says Evelyn, that great and good man, and most accomplished scholar, whose name it is delightful to mention with the respect due to it, in the very outset of a work connected with the Sylvan subjects, which he so much enjoyed and so ably illustrated; "so it is that our tree, like man, whose inverted symbol he is, being sown in corruption rises in glory, and by little and little ascending into one hard erect stem of comely dimensions, becometh a solid tower, as it were. And that this, which but

lately a single ant could easily have borne to his little cavern, should now become capable of resisting the fury, and braving the rage of the most impetuous storms,—*magni mehercle artificis, clausisse totum in tam exiguo, et horror est consideranti.*

" For their preservation Nature has invested the whole tribe and nation, as we may say, of vegetables, with garments suitable to their naked and exposed bodies, temper, and climate. Thus some are clad with a coarser skin, and resist all extremes of weather; others with more tender and delicate skins and scarfs, as it were, and thinner raiment. *Quid foliorum describam diversitates?* What shall we say of the mysterious forms, variety, and variegation of the leaves and flowers, contrived with such art, yet without art; some round, others long, oval, multangular, indented, crisped, rough, smooth and polished, soft and flexible; quivering at every tremulous blast, as if it would drop in a moment, and yet so obstinately adhering, as to be able to contest against the fiercest winds that prostrate mighty structures! There it abides till God bids it fall: for so the wise Disposer of things has placed it, not only for ornament, but use and protection both of body and fruit, from the excessive heat of summer, and colds of the sharpest winters, and their immediate impressions; as we find it in all such places and trees, as, like the blessed and good man, have always fruit upon them ripe, or preparing to mature.

"Let us examine with what care the seeds,—those little souls of plants, *quorum exilitas*, as one says, *vix locum inveniat*, in which the whole and complete tree, though invisible to our dull sense, is yet perfectly and entirely wrapped up,—exposed as they seem to be, to all those accidents of weather, storms, and rapacious birds, are yet preserved from violation, diminution, and detriment, within their spiny, armed, and compacted receptacles, where they sleep, as in their causes, till their prisons let them gently fall into the embraces of the earth, now made pregnant with the season, and ready for another burden: for at the time of year she fails not to bring them forth. With what delight have I beheld this tender and innumerable offspring repullulating at the feet of an aged tree! from whence the suckers are drawn, transplanted, and educated by human industry; and forgetting the ferity of their nature, become civilized to all his employments.

"But I cease to expatiate farther on these wonders, that I may not anticipate the pleasures with which the serious contemplator on those stupendous works of Nature, or rather God of Nature, will find himself even rapt and transported, were his contemplations only applied to the production of a single wood."

It is in this spirit that woods and groves should ever be visited; it is feelings like these that restore them to their original representation of a verdant Paradise, planted by God himself, for man therein

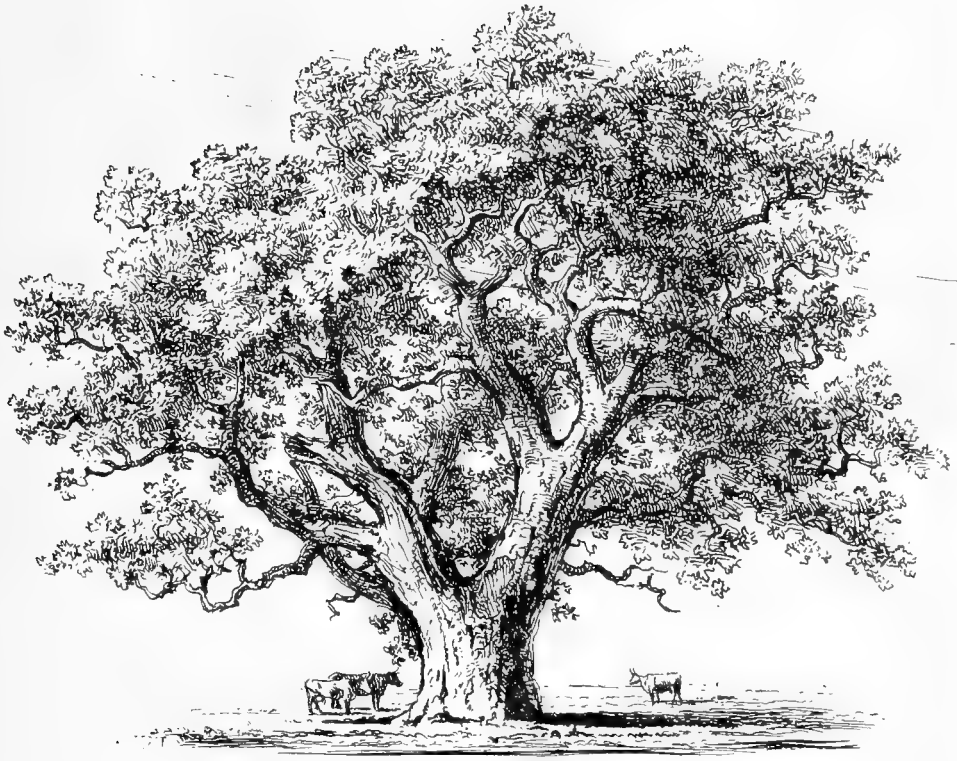
to hold communion with him, and delight in the innocent enjoyment of his bounties! But to return from generals to particulars. The Panshanger Oak, as we have seen, is characterised by elegance; if we wish to study the attribute of strength, by which the lord of the woods is more peculiarly distinguished, we need only turn our eyes to

THE WOTTON OAK,

in the park of Wotton under Bernwood, a seat belonging to his Grace the Duke of Buckingham. It measures twenty-five feet in circumference, at one foot from the ground, and at the height of twelve feet divides into four large limbs, the principal of which is fifteen feet in circumference. It rises to an elevation of about ninety feet, and covers an area of fifty yards in diameter with its branches, recalling, to the mind of the spectator, Virgil's magnificent description of a similar object:

——————— quæ, quantum vertice ad auras
Ætherias, tantum radice in Tartara tendit.
Ergo non hyemes illam, non flabra, neque imbres
Convellunt: immota manet, multosque nepotes,
Multa virum volvens durando sæcula vincit.
Tum fortes late ramos et brachia tendens
Huc illuc, media ipsa ingentem sustinet umbram.

——————— whose roots descend
As low towards Pluto's realms, as high in air



The Wotton Oak.

Its massive branches rise. The utmost rage
Of wintry storms howls o'er its strength in vain.
Successive generations of mankind,
Revolving ages, flourish and decay,
Yet still immoveable it stands, and throws
Its vigorous limbs around, and proudly bears
With firm and solid trunk its stately form,
A mighty canopy of thickest shade.

VIRGIL, Georg. II. 291.

With full as much truth of nature, though with less pomp of diction, is the Oak described, flourishing, vigorous, rejoicing among his peers, in the following lines of "Dan Chaucer," the father of our verse, the "pure well of English undefiled;" from which so many succeeding bards have drank their first draughts of poetic inspiration:

——————— "A plesaunt grove . . .

* * * * * * *

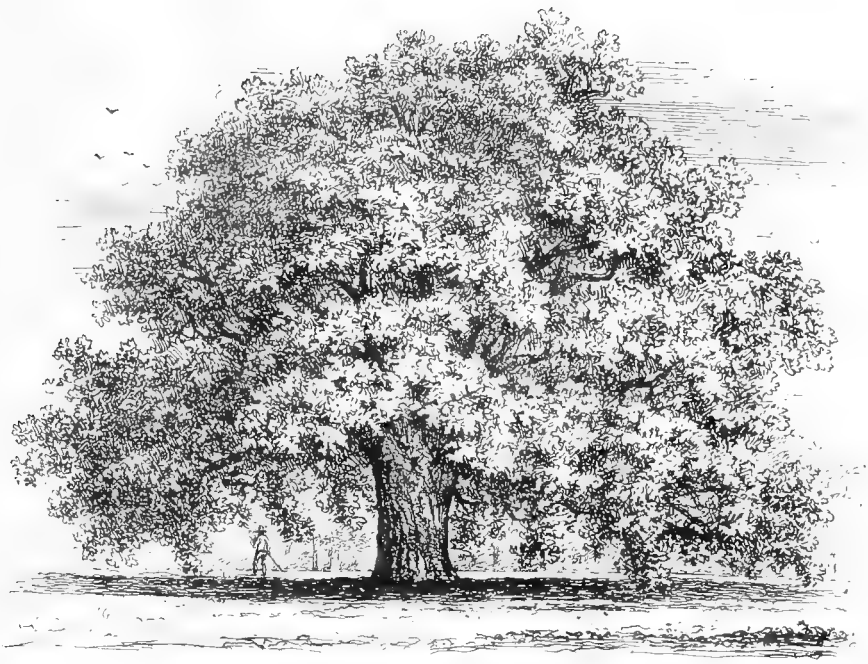
In which were Okis grete, streight as a line,
Undir the which the grass so freshe of hew
Was newly sprong, and an eight fote, or nine,
Every tree well fro his fellow grew,
With braunches brode, ladin with levis new,
That, sprongin out agen, the sonnè shene,
Some very rede; and some a glad light grene."

CHAUCER:—The Floure and the Leafe.

Perhaps, there is no where to be found so fine an illustration of the extent to which the oak will throw its broad arms and leafy canopies, when unintruded upon by other stems, as in—

THE CHANDOS OAK,

which stands in the pleasure-grounds of Michendon House, at Southgate, the property of His Grace the Duke of Buckingham. Its girth at one foot from the ground is eighteen feet three inches; at three feet, it is fifteen feet nine inches. The height of the stem to the branches is eight feet; and at that distance from the ground it is seventeen feet in girth. It is sixty feet in height, and the extremity of its boughs includes a line of one hundred and eighteen feet. It is in this last particular that its great attraction consists. When it is in the full pride of its foliage, it strikes the spectator with sensations similar to those inspired by the magnificent Banyan trees of the East. Its boughs bending to the earth, with almost artificial regularity of form and equidistance from each other, give it the appearance of a gigantic tent; with verdant draperies, drawn up to admit the refreshing breezes that curl the myriads of leaves which form altogether a mass of vegetable beauty and grandeur, scarcely to be equalled by any other production of the same nature in the kingdom. It is a magnificent living canopy—*nulli penetrabilis astro*—impervious to the day. If, however, in the full pride of summer, this tree presents so refreshing a spectacle of breathing



coolness, and amplitude of shade, it affords a still more singular and striking one in the invigorating sharpness of an autumnal morning; when its thousand boughs, and every pendent twig, are gemmed with crystals, reflecting the rays which no longer scorch, and dazzle only to please. The following lines, inspired by contemplating it under this aspect, and written beneath the branches thus clothed in icicles, whose brief glories were rapidly melting away before an ascending sun, will not, it is presumed, be unacceptable to the lover of fanciful imagery and harmonious numbers.

Were now my spirit lapp'd in dreaming mood,
I verily might think, majestic tree!
That I, Louisa near, in company
Of some most fair and beauteous Naiad stood
In her own temple, 'neath the fountain flood;
In her own temple, roof'd all gorgeously
With gem and chrysolite—or I might be
Embower'd with Fairy-queen in magic wood,
The small leaves raining down a silver light,
About our couch—or, under ceiling bright,
Starr'd with the twinklings of ten thousand eyes,
Such as illume the Houri's paradise;
Or else—but ah! so wondrous fair the sight,
That fancy in the unfinish'd effort dies!

THE SQUITCH BANK OAK

also is in its full vigour and beauty. Its circumference at the roots is forty-three feet; and at five feet high it is twenty-one feet nine inches. It is thirty-three feet in height to the crown; and twenty-eight feet above; in all sixty-one feet. The butt contains six hundred and sixty feet nine inches of timber; the principal limb seventy-nine feet six inches; and the other limbs, fourteen in number, two hundred and seventy-two feet seven inches; making its total contents one thousand and twelve feet seven inches of solid timber.

This majestic tree stands in Bagot's Park, about four miles from Blithfield, near Litchfield, the seat of the Right Honorable Lord Bagot; who may be regarded as one of the greatest encouragers of Oak timber in the kingdom, having planted two millions of acorns on his estates in Staffordshire and Wales; which display, on every side, scenes of sylvan beauty and grandeur that can scarcely be surpassed. Bagot's Park, in particular, abounds with rich and graceful variety of scenery. The gardens bloom with a thousand sweets; the birds warble among them in notes of gratitude to the fresh and balmy air. The lawns, clothed with oaks and clumps of trees, exhibit the most soft and delicious

The Squitch Bank Oak [illegible] Bag.

verdure, and present at every turn splendid views over a rich and woody country. The Park itself abounds with magnificent and ancient timber; and is bordered with the romantic cliffs that rise on the banks of the river Dove. The stilness of antique trees and forest glades is relieved by animated groups of red deer, whose characteristics peculiarly suit the features of the scene, and by a yet more striking race of wild goats, originally presented by Richard the Second to one of Lord Bagot's ancestors. It was amid scenes so inspiring and delightful, and under the encouraging influence of attentions from their noble owner, of which he must always retain a grateful remembrance, that the Author of this work made his first sketch for it, well pleased, as Horace has expressed it—

"Tacitum sylvas inter reptare salubres:"

And he trusts he shall not be accused of an undue degree of egotism, if he so far yields to the impulse of his feelings, as to acknowledge in this place the gratification he has derived from finding his attempt to form a national record of some of the principal Forest Trees that peculiarly ornament England above all other countries, so generously received by the public, as well as by the distinguished individuals from whose domains his subjects have been principally taken.

THE BEGGAR'S OAK

is a fine sample of the real Park Oak, unpruned, unpollarded, throwing its broad arms around in all the freedom and majesty of its nature. It is supposed to have received its name from the accommodation it is so well calculated to afford in its ample canopy, "star-proof," and its moss-grown roots, to the weary mendicants who may in former times have been tempted to seek the shade of its branches for repose or shelter. Its girth at five feet from the ground is twenty feet; the circumference of the roots which project above the surface of the ground is sixty-eight feet, and the branches extend about sixteen yards from the trunk in every direction. It contains by admeasurement eight hundred and seventy-seven cubic feet of timber, which, including the bark, would have produced, at a price offered for it in 1812, the sum of £202. 14*s*. 9*d*. But this noble tree, as well as many other of the "giants of the forest," with which Bagot's Park abounds, are secure from the axe, under the protection of their present munificent proprietor; who best shows his sense of the value of the woody domains received from his ancestors, by endeavouring to secure the same gratification to his posterity; annually planting a large portion of his estates, with a taste and zeal

The Beggar's Oak - Bagot's Park

which well deserve to be imitated, by all such landed proprietors as may be actuated by a laudable ambition to make their private possessions a source of public ornament and of national wealth. And that appeals may not be wanting to self-love, as well as to considerations of the welfare of posterity, let us hear what is said on the subject by Evelyn, whose own green and prosperous old-age verified the truth of his remarks: "And now, lastly, to encourage those to plant that have opportunity, and those who innocently and with reluctance are forced to cut down, and endeavour to supply the waste with their utmost industry. It is observed that such planters are often blessed with health and old-age. Of their extraordinary longevity we have given abundant instances in this discourse; and it seems to be so universally remarked, that as Paulus Venetus, that great traveller, reports, the Tartarian astrologers affirm nothing contributes more to men's long lives than the planting of many trees. Hæc Scripsi Octagenarius; and shall, if God protract my years, and continue my health, be continually planting, till it shall please him to *transplant* me into those glorious regions above, the celestial Paradise, planted with perennial groves and trees, bearing immortal fruit; for such is the tree of life, which they who do his commandments have right to." *Sylva*, p. 645.

Having thus far dwelt on the Oak in its vigour

and maturity, we must next consider it in the period, far more interesting to the painter, the poet, or the moralist—of its decay. Who can look upon an object like

THE SALCEY FOREST OAK,

without feeling contemplations awakened in his breast, on the vicissitudes of ages, and the perishable nature of all created forms; which must, for the moment at least, elevate his thoughts to higher states of existence, where good cannot deteriorate, and is secure of endurance.

Salcey Forest is in Northamptonshire; between the forests of Rockingham on the North, and of Whittlebury on the South-west, by which the woodland part of that county is divided into three main parcels. Of these Salcey Forest is the smallest; being not more than a mile in breadth, and scarcely a mile and a half in length: but its verdant appearance, enlivened by the variety of spreading thorns, which spring among its majestic Oaks, renders it, particularly in the beginning of the summer, when they put forth their white blossoms, and scent the air with their fragrance, a delightful haunt for the lovers of sylvan scenery. Camden speaks of it as a place set apart for game; and even in the present day, its numerous troops of fallow deer, its tempting

The Salcey-Forest Oak.

copses, and picturesque herds of cattle, give it an animation not less attractive to the sportsman than to the painter.

The Oak which maintains so proud a pre-eminence over all its brethren in this forest, was, in 1794, according to the account of H. Rooke, Esq. F.S.A., in circumference at the bottom, where there are no projecting spurs, forty-six feet ten inches; at one yard from the ground, thirty-nine feet ten inches; at two yards, thirty-five feet nine inches; at three yards, thirty-five feet. Circumference within the trunk, near the ground, twenty-nine feet; at one yard from the bottom, twenty-four feet seven inches; at two yards, eighteen feet six inches; at three yards, sixteen feet two inches. The height within the hollow was at that time fourteen feet eight inches, and the height of the tree itself, on the outside to the top branch, thirty-nine feet three inches. Of its age, a calculation may be formed from the following observations of the ingenious Thomas South, Esq., communicated in his fourth Letter on the Growth of Oaks, addressed to the Bath Society. Speaking of an ancient hollow tree, the Bull Oak, on Oakly Farm, he informs us, that about twenty years before the time of his writing, 1783, he had the curiosity to measure this tree. "Its head," he proceeds to relate, "was as green and vigorous last summer, as it was at that time; and though hollow as a tube, it has increased in its

measure, some inches. Upon the whole, this bears every mark of having been a short-stemmed, branchy tree, of the first magnitude; spreading its arms in all directions round it. Its aperture is a small, ill-formed gothic arch, hewn out, or enlarged with an axe, and the bark now curls over the wound—a sure sign that it continues growing: and hence it is evident, that the hollow oaks of enormous size recorded by antiquaries, did not obtain such bulk whilst sound; for the shell increases when the substance is no more. The blea, and the inner bark, receive annual tributes of nutritious particles, from the sap, in its progress to the leaves; and from thence acquire a power of extending the outer bark, and increasing its circumference slowly. Thus a tree, which at three hundred years old was sound, and five feet in diameter, like the Langley Oak, would, if left to perish gradually, in its thousandth year become a shell of ten feet diameter."

"Hence," says Mr. Rooke, "we find by this curious investigation of the growth of Oaks, that a tree of about thirty feet in circumference may be supposed to have attained the age of a thousand years. Upon this calculation we may conclude, that the Great Salcey Forest Oak, which is only within two inches of forty-seven feet in circumference, cannot be less than fifteen hundred years old." It is equally probable that it should be more. Mr. Marsham calculated the Bentley Oak to be

fifteen hundred years old, when it was four hundred and eight inches in circumference; whereas the Salcey Forest Oak is, as we see, five hundred and sixty-two.

The following lines, written by Cowper on the Yardley Oak, may be applied, with equal truth, to the Salcey Forest Oak, as a proof how closely the descriptive powers of poetry may compete with the imitative ones of painting, to present an object to the mind with the most exact fidelity of nature:

"Embowell'd now, and of thy ancient self
Possessing nought but the scoop'd rind that seems
An huge throat, calling to the clouds for drink,
Which it would give in rivulets to thy root,
Thou temptest none, but rather much forbidd'st
The feller's toil, which thou could'st ill requite.
Yet is thy root secure, sound as the rock;
A quarry of stout spars and knotted fangs,
Which, crook'd into a thousand whimsies, clasp
The stubborn soil, and hold thee still erect.
* * * * * * *
Thine arms have left thee, winds have rent them off
Long since; and rovers of the forest wild,
With bow and shaft, have burnt them. Some have left
A splinter'd stump, bleach'd to a snowy white;
And some memorial none, where once they grew.
Yet life still lingers in thee, and puts forth
Proof, not contemptible, of what she can,
Even where death predominates. The spring
Finds thee not less alive to her sweet force,
That yonder upstarts of the neighbouring wood,
So much thy juniors; who their birth receiv'd
Half a millennium since the date of thine." COWPER.

THE BULL OAK

in Wedgenock Park, Warwickshire, is the property of the Earl of Warwick. "Bull-Oaks," says Mr. South, whose remarks on the growth of Oaks, as elicited by his observations on this tree, we have just given, "are thus denominated from the no uncommon circumstance of bulls taking shelter within them; which these animals effect, not by going in and turning round, but by retreating backwards into the cavity, till the head, only, projects at the aperture. The one I am about to particularize stands in the middle of a pasture, bears the most venerable marks of antiquity, gives the name compounded of itself and its situation to the farm on which it grows, viz. Oakly Farm, and was the favourite retreat of a bull. Twenty people, old and young, have crowded into it at a time; a calf being shut up there for convenience, its dam, a two-year-old heifer, constantly went in to suckle it, and left sufficient room for milking her. It is supposed to be near a thousand years old; the body is nothing but a shell, covered with burly protuberances; the upper part of the shaft is hollow like a chimney; it has been mutilated of all its limbs, but from their stumps arise a number of small branches, forming a bushy head, so remarkable for fertility, that in years of plenty it has produced two sacks of acorns in a sea-

The Bull Oak Wedgnock Park Warwickshire

son." The dimensions of this venerable remnant of antiquity are, at one yard from the ground, eleven yards one foot; one foot above the ground, thirteen yards one foot; six feet from the ground, twelve yards one foot; broadest side, seven yards five inches; close to the ground, eighteen yards, one foot, seven inches; height of the trunk about four yards one foot.

The following lines, from Spenser, describe its present condition so admirably, that they may well be admitted as an adjunct to the pencil which has endeavoured to delineate it:

There grew an aged tree on the green,
A goodly Oak some time had it been,
With arms full long, and largely display'd,
But of their leaves they were disarray'd;
The body big, and mightily pight,
Thoroughly rooted, and of wondrous height:
Whilom had been the king of the field,
And mochel mast to the husband did yield;
And with his nuts larded many swine,
But now the gray moss marred his rine;
His bared boughs were beaten with storms,
His top was bald and wasted with worms;
His honour decay'd, his branches sere.

SHEPHERD'S CALENDAR.

THE SWILCAR LAWN OAK

stands in Needwood Forest, in Staffordshire. It is known, by historical documents, to be more than six hundred years old; and it is still far from being in the last stage of decay. Its girth, at the height of six feet from the ground, is twenty-one feet four inches and a half. Fifty-four years ago it was girthed in the same place, by a labouring man still living, and measured at that time nineteen feet. It is a magnificent tree, and has the advantage of looking fully as large as it really is. "Few persons," says Mr. Burgess, in his interesting remarks on the Oak, "save those to whom habit has rendered it familiar, form any thing like just estimates of the veritable size of trees. The situations in which they are commonly seen, harmonizing with the illimitable expanse of heaven, and the wildest extent of forest scenery, or of mountain heights, lessen, ideally, their intrinsic bulk; nor is it till singled from the surrounding landscape, nor even then, until the theodolite and rule proclaim their sums, that we become persuaded of their vast extent: nay, figures themselves, to the generality of the world, convey but imperfect conceptions of length and breadth, and height and girth. Some more familiar representatives are wanted to prove that a majestic tree, which is only in moderate proportion, as an ornament to nature in the country, is really

an enormous mass, and would show as a large and glorious structure among the dwellings and palaces of man in town."

The Swilcar Lawn Oak has been celebrated in poetic strains by several modern bards; among whom may be particularized Mr. Mundy, whose mention of it, in his poem of "Needwood Forest," drew forth the following elegant compliment to himself, and animated apostrophe to the venerable subject of his verse, from the pen of Dr. Darwin:—

"Hail, stately Oak! whose wrinkled trunk hath stood,
Age after age, the sov'reign of the wood;
You, who have seen a thousand springs unfold
Their ravell'd buds, and dip their flowers in gold;
Ten thousand times yon moon re-light her horn,
And that bright eye of evening gild the morn!

"Say, when of old the snow-hair'd druids pray'd
With mad-eyed rapture in yon hallow'd shade,
While to their altars bards and heroes throng,
And crowding nations join the ecstatic song;
Did e'er such dulcet notes arrest your gales,
As Mundy pours along the list'ning vales?

"Yes, stately Oak, thy leaf-wrapp'd head sublime,
Ere long must perish in the wrecks of time;
Should o'er thy brow the thunders harmless break,
And thy firm roots, in vain, the whirlwinds shake,
Yet must thou fall:—thy with'ring glories sunk,
Arm after arm shall leave thy mould'ring trunk!
But Mundy's verse shall consecrate thy name,
And rising forests envy Swilcar's fame;
Green shall thy germs expand, thy branches play,
And bloom for ever in th' immortal lay."

THE MOCCAS PARK OAK

is thirty-six feet in circumference, at three feet from the ground; it stands in the Park of Moccas Court, on the banks of the Wye, in Herefordshire; the seat of Sir George Amyand Cornewall, Bart., who traces his ancestry from Richard, second son of King John, Earl of Cornwall, and King of the Romans. The whole estate, from the very nature of its situation, forming part of the borders between England and Wales, is fraught with historical associations, which extend themselves, with pleasing interest, to this ancient "monarch of the wood," among whose boughs the war-cry has often reverberated in former ages, and who has witnessed many a fierce contention, under our Henries and our Edwards, hand to hand and foot to foot, for the domains on which he still survives, in venerable, though decaying majesty, surrounded by aged denizens of the forest, the oldest of whom, nevertheless, compared with himself, seem but as of yesterday. The stilness of the scene, at the present time, forms a soothing contrast to the recollections of the turbulent past; and the following lines are so in harmony with the reflections it is calculated to awaken, that it is hoped the transplanting of them, from the pages

The Moccas-Park Oak

of a brother amateur of the forests, to the page before us, will not displease either him or the reader:

"Than a tree, a grander child earth bears not.
What are the boasted palaces of man,
Imperial city or triumphal arch,
To forests of immeasurable extent,
Which Time confirms, which centuries waste not?
Oaks gather strength for ages; and when at last
They wane, so beauteous in decrepitude,
So grand in weakness! E'en in their decay
So venerable! 'Twere sacrilege t' escape
The consecrating touch of time. Time watched
The blossom on the parent bough. Time saw
The acorn loosen from the spray. Time passed
While, springing from its swaddling shell, yon Oak
The cloud-crown'd monarch of our woods, by thorns
Environ'd, scaped the raven's bill, the tooth
Of goat and deer, the schoolboy's knife, and sprang
A royal hero from his nurse's arms.
Time gave it seasons, and Time gave it years,
Ages bestow'd, and centuries grudged not:
Time knew the sapling when gay summer's breath
Shook to the roots the infant Oak, which after
Tempests moved not. Time hollow'd in its trunk
A tomb for centuries: and buried there
The epochs of the rise and fall of states,
The fading generations of the world,
The memory of man."

THE KING OAK

forms a conspicuous feature in Savernake Forest, one of the most interesting spots in the kingdom, to the lovers of wild wood scenery. Whilst exploring its tangled haunts and gazing on the massive trunks that every where throw their aged arms across his path, the imagination of the spectator wafts him back to the days of William the Conqueror, and all the vaunted privileges of the chase. It belongs to the Marquess of Aylesbury, and is almost the only forest in England in the hands of a subject; by whom, in strict language, only a chase is tenable. The King Oak, its most venerable ornament, spreads its branches over a diameter of sixty yards, and is twenty-four feet in girth. The trunk is quite hollow, and altogether its age appears to warrant the idea that it may have witnessed in its infancy those rites and sacrifices of our Saxon ancestors which were held in these shadowy recesses, at once to increase their solemnity, and to shield them from the profane eyes of vulgar observers. Could this "eldest of forms" be questioned on its origin, we may imagine its reply in the often-quoted lines:

> "In my great grandsire's trunk did Druids dwell;
> My grandsire with the Roman Empire fell:
> Myself a sapling when my father bore
> Victorious Edward to the Gallic shore."

The King Oak. Savernake Forest

Gilpin rightly observes, that of all species of landscape there is none which so universally captivates mankind as forest scenery. However the agriculturist or the political economist may remind us, that our prosperity as a nation must increase in proportion as the plough and the scythe gain ground upon the woods, we still, as individuals, cling in imagination to those haunts of liberty and contemplation, which afforded man his first shelter; still delight in their endless variety of hues and forms, and vocal sounds; and find ourselves alternately elevated by the solemnity of their solitudes, or cheered by the animation of the occupations and habits of the tribes connected with them. Out of ninety English forests, enumerated by Gilpin, how few remain as present ornaments and nurseries of future wealth! Who would not be grieved to see such noble sylvan districts as the forests of Windsor and Marlborough denuded and laid waste—a scene of desolation, such as the site of a forest no longer a forest peculiarly exhibits? We may be allowed, therefore, to lament, that "of all sublunary things, the woodland scene, which is amongst the most beautiful, should be among the most perishable:"

"——————— Woods
Which shelter'd once the stag and gristly boar,
Scarce to the timid hare now refuge lend."

At a little distance from the King Oak is—

THE CREEPING OAK,

so called from the circumstance of one of its main limbs having crept so closely to the earth in its youth, that in its old age it actually reclines the weight of its increasing years upon the ground; forming, in doing so, a pleasing irregularity of outline very agreeable to the eye of a painter, which naturally abhorreth the idea of a straight line, as much as Descartes did that of a vacuum. Never were noble avenues and "alleys green" seen in more beauty than on the lovely day in autumn, when this sketch was made amid their variegated shades. "Every season has its peculiar product, and is pleasing or admirable from causes that variously affect our different temperaments or dispositions; but there are accompaniments in an autumnal morning's woodland walk, that call for all our notice and admiration: the peculiar feeling of the air, and the solemn grandeur of the scene around us, dispose the mind to contemplation and remark: there is a silence in which we hear every thing: a beauty that will be observed. The stump of an old oak is a very landscape—with rugged alpine steeps bursting through forests of verdant mosses, with some pale denuded branchless lichen, like a scathed oak, creeping up the sides or crowning the summit. Rambling with unfettered grace,

The Creeping Oak, Savernake Forest.

the tendrils of the briary festoon, with its brilliant berries, green, red, yellow, the slender sprigs of the hazel or the thorn; it ornaments their plainness, and receives a support its own feebleness denies. The agaric, with all its hues, its shades, its elegant variety of forms, expands its cone, sprinkled with the freshness of the morning; a transient fair, a child of decay, that "sprang up in a night and will perish in a night." The squirrel, agile with life and timidity, gambolling round the root of an ancient beech, its base overgrown with the dewberry, blue with unsullied fruit, impeded in his frolic sports, half angry, darts up the silvery bole again, to peep and wonder at the strange intruder on his haunts. The jay springs up, and screaming, tells us of danger to her brood,—the noisy tribe repeat the call,—are hushed, and leave us. The loud laugh of the woodpecker, joyous and vacant: the hammering of the nut-hatch, cleaving its prize in the chink of some dry bough: the humble bee, torpid on the disk of the purple thistle . . . Then falls the "sere and yellow leaf," parting from its spray without a breeze tinkling in the boughs, and rustling, scarce audibly, along, rests at our feet and tells that we part too."—*Journal of a Naturalist*, p. 117.

THE GOSPEL OAK.

The custom of making the boundaries of parishes, by the neighbouring inhabitants going round them once a-year, and stopping at certain spots to perform different ceremonies, in order that the localities might be impressed on the memories of the young, as they were attested by the recollections of the old, is still common in various parts of the kingdom. The custom itself is of great antiquity, and is supposed by some to have been derived from the feast called Terminalia, which was dedicated to the God Terminus, who was considered as the guardian of fields and land-marks, and the promoter of friendship and peace among men. Its beneficial effects, and social influence, are thus described by Withers, in the quaint style of two centuries by-gone :—

> " That every man might keep his own possessions,
> Our fathers used, in reverent *processions*,
> (With zealous prayers, and with praiseful cheere,)
> To walk their parish limits once a-year ;
> And well-known marks (which sacrilegious hands
> Now cut or breake) so bordered out their lands,
> That every one distinctly knew his owne ;
> And many brawles now rife, were then unknowne."

It was introduced among Christians about the year 800, by the pious Avitus, Bishop of Vienna, in a season of dearth and calamity, and has been con-

The Gospel Oak - near Stoneleigh, Warwickshire

tinued since his time by the different clergy. The minister of each parish, accompanied by his church-wardens and parishioners, going round the bounds and limits of his parish in Rogation Week, or on one of the three days before Holy Thursday, (the feast of our Lord's Ascension,) and stopping at remarkable spots and trees, to recite passages from the Gospels, and implore the blessing of the Almighty on the fruits of the earth, and for the preservation of the rights and properties of the parish. The learned and excellent Andrews, Bishop of Winchester, left a fine model of prayer for these occasions; and it must have been a soothing sight to witness the devotional feelings of the multitude, thus called forth in the simplicity of patriarchal worship in the open air, and surrounded by the works of God.

Maluit umbrosam quercum:

and it would be difficult to select a more fit object than the broad oak to mark their resting place, and to serve as an altar beside which to offer up their prayers; as in times of yore the worshippers of God were wont to do, in their solemn groves, before temples made by hands were built to Him, and the place of His holy tabernacle fixed by His own divine revelation.

Many of these Gospel trees are to be found in different parts of the country; about Wolverhampton in particular, the boundaries and township of the parish are marked by them, and they are preserved

with the greatest care and attention. That they often possessed a double claim on the regard of the young, by being made the witnesses of vows not likely to be forgotten, we may gather from the plaintive injunction Herrick puts into the mouth of one of his lovers, in his Hesperides:

"———— Dearest, bury me
Under that holy oke, or GOSPEL TREE;
Where, though thou see'st not, thou may'st think upon
Me, when thou yeerly go'st Procession."

The Gospel Oak near Stoneleigh stands in a little retired coppice, the solitude of which is equally favourable to thought and to devotion, to the reveries of the philosopher on ages past, and the contemplation of the Christian on the ages to come.

Lucos et ipsa silentia adoramus.

"In the fresh fields, His own Cathedral meet,
Built by Himself, star-roof'd, and hung with green,
Wherein all breathing things, in concord sweet,
Organ'd by winds, perpetual hymns repeat."

THE COWTHORPE OAK.

This gigantic and venerable tree stands at the extremity of the village of Cowthorpe, near Wetherby, in Yorkshire, in a retired field, sheltered on one side by the ancient church belonging to the place, and on another by a farm-house; the rural

The Cowthorpe Oak.

occupations of which exactly accord with the character of the Oak, whose aged arms are extended towards it with a peculiar air of rustic vigour, retained even in decay: like some aged peasant, whose toil-worn limbs still give evidence of the strength which enabled him to acquit himself of the labours of his youth. It is mentioned by the late Doctor Hunter, in his edition of Evelyn's Sylva; in the following note on a passage respecting the extraordinary size of an Oak in Sheffield Park: "Neither this, nor any of the Oaks mentioned by Mr. Evelyn, bear any proportion to one now growing at Cowthorpe, near Wetherby, upon an estate belonging to the Right Hon. Lady Stourton—the dimensions are almost incredible: within three feet of the surface it measures sixteen yards, and close by the ground twenty-six yards: its height in its present ruinous state (1776) is almost eighty-five feet, and its principal limb extends sixteen yards from the bole. Throughout the whole tree the foliage is extremely thin, so that the anatomy of the ancient branches may be distinctly seen in the height of summer. When compared to this, all other trees are but children of the Forest."—Book III. page 500.

According to this statement, it should appear that the Cowthorpe Oak was, at that time, ten feet more in girth than the Powis Oak in Bromfield Wood, near Ludlow, which measured sixty-eight feet round, and nearly forty feet more than the Swilcar Oak;

that is, more than double the size of that tree which, as already stated, there is reason to believe is upwards of six hundred years old, and four times and one-third as large as the old oak in Langley Woods, which tradition traced for upwards of a thousand years. In 1829 it was measured by the Rev. Thomas Jessop of Bilton Hall, who thus states the result in a letter to Mr. Burgess: "The Cowthorpe or Calthorpe Oak is still in existence, though very much decayed: at present it abounds with foliage and acorns, the latter have long stalks, the leaves short ones. The dimensions of the tree, according to my measurement, are as follow: height forty-five feet, (little more than half what it was fifty-three years ago, and then its chief limbs had been destroyed;) circumference close to the ground, (not including the projecting angles,) sixty feet; ditto at one yard high, forty-five feet: extent of principal branch, fifty feet, (an increase of two feet in more than half a century;) mean circumference of ditto, eight feet. I am inclined to think," adds he, "that the original dimensions of this venerable plant were those given in Evelyn's Sylva. The oldest persons in this neighbourhood speak of the tree as having been much higher; and were we to take into account the angles at the base formed by projections from the trunk, the lower periphery might be made out twenty-six yards. It is said by the inhabitants of the village, that seventy persons

at one time got within the hollow of the trunk; but, on inquiry, I found many of these were children; and, as the tree is hollow throughout to the top, I suppose they sat on each other's shoulders: yet, without exaggeration, I believe the hollow capable of containing forty men." The area occupied by the Cowthorpe Oak, where the bottom of its trunk meets the earth, exceeds, as Mr. Burgess remarks, the ground-plot of that majestic column of which an Oak is confessed to have been the prototype; namely, the Eddystone Light-house, raised by the ingenious architect, Mr. Smeaton, after a model drawn from an attentive study of the principles on which Nature enables her gigantic vegetable structures to withstand, for centuries, the furious blasts that often lay prostrate in a moment the proudest works of man: sections of the stem of the one would, at several heights, nearly agree with sections of the curved and cylindrical portions of the shaft of the other; and a chamber of equal extent, or larger than either of those in the light-house, might be hollowed out of its trunk. It is undoubtedly the largest tree at present known in the kingdom, and cannot be looked upon without veneration and regard.

" When the huge trunk whose bare and forked arms
Pierced the mid sky, now prone, shall bud no more,
Still let the massy ruin, like the bones
Of some majestic hero, be preserved
Unviolated and revered——
Whilst the gray father of the vale, at eve,

Returning from his sweltering summer task,
To tend the new-mown grass, or raise the sheaves,
Along the western slope of yon gay hill,
Shall stop to tell his listening sons how far
She stretch'd around her thick-leaved ponderous boughs,
And measure out the space they shadowed."

DAVY.

THE GREENDALE OAK.

There is, perhaps, no spot in England where once were to be found so many ancient and magnificent Oaks as in the Park of Welbeck, in Nottinghamshire, one of the seats of his Grace the Duke of Portland; insomuch that Mr. Rooke, a fellow of the Antiquarian Society, and a great lover of forest subjects, thought them worthy, forty years ago, of a detailed account, wherein he gave the characteristics of many which have now laid their leafy honours low. But the Greendale Oak, however, still remains, little altered in its general aspect by the lapse of half a century since it was described as a ruin. In the year 1724, a road-way was cut through its venerable trunk, higher than the entrance to Westminster Abbey, and sufficiently capacious to permit a carriage and four horses to pass through it. A print of it was published at that time, in which it scarcely varies from its present appearance, excepting that the artist has sought to heighten the effect by choosing the moment when one of the old-fashioned equipages of the day, with its four long-tailed appendages was passing through

The Greendale Oak

the cavity. In 1790, Mr. Rooke gave the measurement of it as follows:—The circumference of the trunk above the arch, is thirty-five feet three inches; height of the arch, ten feet three inches; width about the middle, six feet three inches; height to the top branch fifty-four feet. Evelyn, and after him Hunter, makes some slight variation in these measurements. Evelyn calculates that two hundred and twenty-five head of cattle might stand within the shadow of its branches; but at the present day the herd must be indeed diminished if their owner should mean them to escape the heat of the meridian sun, from the shelter of its few remaining branches and thinly scattered foliage. It is no way surprising that this should be the case, as it appears that the loss of them, naturally attendant on the chances of elemental war, and the ravages of time, was anticipated from other causes; among which may be reckoned the partiality of the Countess of Oxford to the tree, of which the family might well be proud, insomuch that she had, as Mr. Rooke informs us, "several cabinets made out of the branches, and ornamented with inlaid representations of the oak, with the following inscriptions:

Sæpe sub hac Dryades festas duxere choreas:
Sæpe etiam, manibus nexis ex ordine, trunci
Circuiere modum; mensuraque roboris ulnas
Quinque ter implebat; nec non et cetera tanto
Sylva sub hac, sylva quanto jacet herba sub omni."

OVID MET.

"When all the woodland nymphs their revels play'd,
And footed sportive rings around its shade;
Not fifteen cubits could encompass round
The ample trunk on consecrated ground;
As much its height the other trees exceeds,
As they o'ertop the grass and humbler weeds."

"Lo the oake that hath so long a norishing
Fro' the time that it ginneth first to spring,
And hath so long a life, as we may see,
Yet, at the last, wasted is the tree."

CHAUCER.

We will now, dismissing these venerable patriarchs of the forest, consider some of their brethren, which, if inferior to them in years and bulk, yet possess equal claims on notice, as being connected with names and incidents familiar in our historical records, or in the traditions of "olden times." The forests of "Merry England" have, from time immemorial, been the scene of bold adventure and romantic incident; from the period when the legions of Cæsar disturbed the aged Druids in their secret rites, and the Roman axe invaded the pride of their solemn groves, to the time when the fate-directed arrow of Tyrrel, with retributive justice, smote his heedless and cruel-hearted prince: or to days still more recent, when the horn of the jovial outlaw, Robin Hood, resounded in the greenwood shade, and the adventures and exploits of that peerless wight, mingled with tales of monks, fair dames, chivalrous knights, and distressed damsels, were rife, and of

daily report in men's ears. Our early food was acorns; and our very poetic existence is strangely blended with our oaks. Thor and Odin may dwell in their vast and dreary caverns of the North. A more beautiful and gentle race are the legendary tenants of our groves; or Jonson and Shakspeare have belied their muse; and Chaucer has poured forth his descriptive melodies in vain. Even the grave and classic Milton, when he tells

"Of forests and enchantments drear,"

departing from the time-hallowed superstitions of the Greek and Roman page, acknowledges

"Each gentle habitant of grove and spring,"

and indulges his fancy on the subject of these popular and romantic traditions, with an elegance and grace peculiarly his own:

. . . . . "fairy elves,
Whose midnight revels, by a forest side
Or fountain, some belated peasant sees,
Or dreams he sees, while over head the moon
Sits arbitress, and nearer to the earth
Wheels her pale course; they, on their mirth and dance
Intent, with jocund music charm his ear:
At once with joy and fear his heart rebounds."

PARADISE LOST, B. 1.

But we must not be tempted, by fairy visions and poetic numbers, to stray too far from the more sober matter of our page; we will therefore return to our original consideration of such trees as may be classed under the head of historical. These

indeed would form a volume in themselves; a Sylvan Chronicle of times past, did we undertake to mention all such as are rendered illustrious by the names of the great and good who have sheltered or meditated under their branches; but our limits restrain us from more than a mere glance at features so interesting.

THE SHELTON OAK,

known familiarly in its neighbourhood by the appellation of "Owen Glendower's Observatory," stands on the road-side, where the Pool road diverges from that which leads to Oswestry, about a mile and a half from Shrewsbury. The spires of that city form a pleasing object in the distance, whilst above them, the famous mountain called the Wrekin lifts its head, and inspires a thousand social recollections, as the well-known toast, that includes all friends around its ample base, is brought to mind by the sight of its lofty summit. The appearance of the Shelton Oak, hollow throughout its trunk, and with a cavity towards the bottom capable of containing at least half a score persons, sufficiently denotes its antiquity. Tradition informs us, that just before the famous battle of Shrewsbury, June 21, 1403, headed on one side by Henry the IVth in person, and on the other by the gallant Henry Percy, surnamed Hotspur, Owen Glendower,

The Shelton Oak

the powerful Welch Chieftain, and the firm adherent of the English Insurgents, ascended this tree, and from its lofty branches, then most probably in the full pride of their vigour, reconnoitred the state of the field: when finding that the King was in great force, and that the Earl of Northumberland had not joined his son Henry, he descended from his leafy observatory, with the prudent resolution of declining the combat, and retreated with his followers to Oswestry. This caution seems scarcely in character with the fierce and heedless courage of

"The irregular and wild Glendower,"

whose martial daring is well pourtrayed by our great dramatic poet, in Hotspur's account of his combat with "the noble Mortimer;" of whom he says:

——————"To prove that true,
Needs no more but one tongue for all those wounds,
Those mouthed wounds, which valiantly he took,
When on the gentle Severn's sedgy bank,
In single opposition, hand to hand,
He did confound the best part of an hour
In changing hardiment with great Glendower.
Three times they breathed, and three times did they drink,
Upon agreement, of swift Severn's flood;
Who then, affrighted with their bloody looks,
Ran fearfully among the trembling reeds,
And hid his crisp head in the hollow bank,
Blood-stained with the valiant combatants."

KING HENRY IV, 1st Part. Act 1. sc. 3.

The great age of the Shelton Oak, thus pointed out by the tradition which connects it with the name of Glendower, is likewise attested by legal documents belonging to Richard Hill Waring, Esq., whose ancestors possessed lands in Shelton, and the neighbourhood, in the reign of Henry III. Among this gentleman's title-deeds is a paper, subscribed, "per me Adam Waring," and entitled, "How the grette Oake at Shelton standeth on my grounde." Wherein is the following mention made of this Oak in 1543.

"Farther he saythe, that by cause the grounde whereby *the said gret oke* standeth is moche more nearer waye and handsom^r^ onto the moost of the said filds of Shelton, m'ckett mylle, and moost of ye cõvenient places to resort to, and for that oon lande of grounde belongyng to my said house stode right and next to the folde southe east ende of my saide house—which said lande of grounde did lye and dothe streight upon the said gret oke," &c.

The circumference of this tree at one foot and a half from the ground is thirty-seven feet, and at five feet from the ground it is twenty-six feet.

QUEEN ELIZABETH'S OAK,

with all its peculiar features and interesting tradition, is so admirably described by the writer with whose

Queen Elizabeth's Oak

lines we have concluded the account of the Cowthorpe Oak, that little apology will be necessary for giving his own words; particularly as the mansion, in his graphic delineation of it, appears in such perfect keeping with the tree, that it would be equally repugnant to taste and good feeling to separate them:

"You surprised me in saying, that you never heard of the tree called Queen Elizabeth's Oak, at Huntingfield, in Suffolk, till I mentioned it. As the distance from Aspal is not more than a morning's airing, I wish you and your pupil would ride over to take a view of it. You may, at the same time, I believe, have an opportunity of seeing a very fine drawing of this grand object, which was made for Sir Gerard Vanneck, by Mr. Hearne. As I measured it with that ingenious artist in a rough way, to settle, in some degree, the proportions of its bulk, it was found to be nearly eleven yards in circumference, at the height of seven feet from the ground; and, if we may conjecture from the condition of other trees of the same sort, in different parts of the kingdom, whose ages are supposed to be pretty well ascertained, from some historical circumstances, I am persuaded this cannot be less than five or six hundred years old.

"The time of growth in trees is generally said to be proportioned to the duration of their timber afterward; and I have now by me a piece of oak, taken

from that side of the ruins of Framlingham Castle, which undoubtedly was part of the original building in the time of Alfred the Great, if not much earlier; which, notwithstanding it had been exposed to the sun and rains for a century at least before I cut it out, yet it still smells woody, and appears to be as sound as when the tree was first felled.

"The Queen's Oak at Huntingfield was situated in a park of the Lord Hunsdon, about two bow-shots from the old mansion-house, where Queen Elizabeth is said to have been entertained by this nobleman, and to have enjoyed the pleasures of the chase in a kind of rural majesty. The approach to it was by a bridge, over an arm of the river Blythe, and, if I remember right, through three square courts. A gallery was continued the whole length of the building, which, opening upon a balcony over the porch, gave an air of grandeur, with some variety to the front. The great hall was built round six straight massy oaks, which originally supported the roof as they grew: upon these the foresters and yeomen of the guard used to hang their nets, cross-bows, hunting-poles, great saddles, calivers, bills, &c. The root of them had been long decayed when I visited this romantic dwelling; and the shafts sawn off at bottom were supported either by irregular logs of wood driven under them, or by masonry. Part of the long gallery, where the Queen and her fair attendants used to divert themselves, was con-

verted into an immense cheese chamber; and upon my first looking into it, in the dusk of a summer's evening, when a number of these huge circular things were scattered upon the floor, it struck me that the maids of honour had just slipped off their fardingales, to prepare for a general romping.

" Elizabeth is reported to have been much pleased with the retirement of this park, which was filled with tall and massy timbers, and to have been particularly amused and entertained with the solemnity of its walks and bowers. But this oak, from which the tradition is that she shot a buck with her own hand, was her favourite tree. It is still in some degree of vigour, though most of its boughs are broken off, and those which remain are approaching to a total decay, as well as its vast trunk: the principal arm, *now bald with dry antiquity*, shoots up to a great height above the leafage, and, being hollow and truncated at top, with several cracks resembling loop-holes, through which the light shines into its cavity, it gives us an idea of the winding staircase in a lofty Gothic turret, which, detached from the other ruins of some venerable pile, hangs tottering to its fall, and affects the mind of a beholder after the same manner, by its greatness and sublimity.

" No traces of the old hall, as it was called, are now remaining; having fallen into an irreparable state of decay. It was taken down a few years

since, by the late Sir Joshua Vanneck, baronet. I have so much of the antiquary in me, as to wish that some memorial of its simple grandeur could have been preserved. You will be delighted with Sir Joshua's noble plantation of oaks, beeches, and chestnuts, &c., with which he has ornamented the whole country, and which, in half a century, as the soil is favourable to them, will be an inexhaustible treasure to the public, as well as to his family."—*Davy's Letters*, vol. i. p. 240.

More than half a century has elapsed since this account was written, but the *Gothic turret* with its irregular loop-holes is still remaining, although somewhat lower in altitude; and Queen Elizabeth's Oak will probably witness the revolutions of more than another century, before its leafy honours are mingled with the dust. It measures thirty-four feet in girth, at five feet from the ground. Mr. Davy imagines it to have been five or six hundred years old at the time he saw it; and its present appearance is sufficiently venerable to bear out the conjecture.

SIR PHILIP SIDNEY'S OAK.

The beautiful estate of Penshurst, on which this tree stands, may be deemed classic ground in every part, as the ancient property of the Sidneys, one of the most illustrious families of which England can

Sir Philip Sydney's Oak — Penshurst

boast. The tree itself has a more particular claim on our veneration, having been planted at the birth of Sir Philip Sidney; a name dear alike to valour and the muses, consecrated by every virtue that could adorn private life, and graced with talents that rendered their possessor the admiration of Europe, even in his bloom of youth. Every memorial of a birth so auspicious, every remembrance of a career so bright, though, alas!

> "Brief as the lightning in the collied night,"

is of value to the poet. Hence, this tree has been celebrated by many of our best writers. Ben Jonson speaks of it as,

> "That taller tree which of a nut was set
> At his great birth where all the Muses met."

And Waller, the gallant and elegant Waller, who never lost sight of an allusion which might add, in the eyes of his mistress, to the vivacity of his attachment, thus immortalizes his numbers, by connecting them with a name which, whilst England exists as a nation, will always be proudly mentioned in her annals.

> "Go, boy, and carve this passion on the bark
> Of yonder tree, which stands the sacred mark
> Of noble SIDNEY'S birth; when such benign,
> Such more than mortal-making stars did shine,
> That there they cannot but for ever prove
> The monument and pledge of humble love:
> His humble love whose hope shall ne'er rise higher
> Than for a pardon that he dares admire."

Sweet sounds often awaken echoes not less sweet: so have these lines of Waller, rushing over a poetic mind, filled it with images of the Sidneys, the Dudleys, the Leicesters of former ages; and brought forth the following interesting picture of the feelings which Penshurst, so long the noble residence of busy and exalted spirits, is calculated to awaken in its present state of comparative desolation and abandonment.

"Ye Towers sublime, deserted now and drear,
Ye woods, deep sighing to the hollow blast,
The musing wanderer loves to linger near,
While History points to all your glories past;
And, startling from their haunts the timid deer,
To trace the walks obscured by matted fern,
Which Waller's soothing lyre were wont to hear,
But where now clamours the discordant heron!
The spoiling hand of Time may overturn
These lofty battlements, and quite deface
The fading canvass, whence we love to learn
Sidney's keen look, and Sacharissa's grace:
But fame and beauty still defy decay,
Saved by the historic page—the poet's tender lay!"

CHARLOTTE SMITH.

OAKS IN YARDLEY CHASE.

These fine trees, known by the characteristic appellation of Gog and Magog, stand in Yardley Forest, and are the property of the Marquess of Northampton.

Oaks in Yardley Chase.

The largest of them, Gog, measures thirty-eight feet at the roots, twenty-eight feet at three feet from the ground; is fifty-eight feet in height, and contains sixteen hundred and sixty-eight feet seven inches of solid timber. Magog is more imposing in dimensions, measuring fifty-four feet four inches at the ground, and thirty-one feet three inches at three feet higher up; but in height it is inferior, being only forty-nine feet: its solid contents are nine hundred and twelve feet ten inches. The estate of the Marquess of Northampton abounds with many other magnificent specimens of forest trees; and it will not lessen their interest to recollect, that among them the poet Cowper often pursued the train of moral thought, and wove the harmonious numbers, with which he afterwards delighted and improved the world; and with what accuracy this observer of nature distinguished the different species of the productions of the Forest, an accuracy not excelled by that of Spenser himself, may be seen in his description of the sylvan haunts he so much loved.

" Nor less attractive is the woodland scene,
Diversified with trees of every growth,
Alike, yet various. Here the gray smooth trunks
Of ash, or lime, or beech, distinctly shine,
Within the twilight of their distant shades;
There, lost behind a rising ground, the wood
Seems sunk, and shorten'd to its topmost boughs.
No tree in all the grove but has its charms,
Though each its hue peculiar; paler some,

And of a wannish gray; the willow such,
And poplar, that with silver lines his leaf,
And ash far-stretching his umbrageous arm;
Of deeper green the elm; and deeper still,
Lord of the woods, the long-surviving oak,
Some glossy-leaved, and shining in the sun—
The maple, and the beech, of oily nuts
Prolific, and the lime at dewy eve
Diffusing odours: nor unnoted pass
The sycamore, capricious in attire,
Now green, now tawny, and ere autumn yet
Have changed the woods, in scarlet honours bright."

THE OAKS AT FREDVILLE.

Nearly in front of the family mansion of John Plumtre, Esq., in his park at Fredville, in the parish of Nonnington, Kent, is a group of oaks known by the names of Majesty, Stately, and Beauty. Seldom are three trees so different from each other in individual character, and so interesting altogether, to be found in such near proximity. Majesty, which, as its name denotes, is the largest, is somewhat more than twenty-eight feet in circumference, at eight feet from the ground, and contains above fourteen hundred feet of timber. Stately, the next in point of size, is a noble specimen of the tall oak; the stem going up straight and clean to the height of seventy feet. The girth, at four feet from the ground, is eighteen feet; and it contains

Oaks at Fredville

about five hundred feet of timber. Beauty, at an equal height, is sixteen feet in circumference, and its solid contents are nearly the same. Altogether these three graces of the forest form a group immediately within sight of the house, which, for magnificence and beauty, is not perhaps to be equalled by any other of the same nature; awakening in the mind of the spectator the most agreeable associations of the freedom and grandeur of woodland scenery, with the security and refinements of cultivated life. "Is it not a pity," says Sir Edward Harley, speaking of some ancient trees of his own, "that such goodly creatures should be devoted to Vulcan?" No such fate, however, attends this graceful trio; and the pleasure with which the spectator views their different characteristics, is heightened by a sense that they are likely to remain cherished and protected equally in their decay as in their prime. Protected from violence, they will probably stand many centuries; and it may be hoped that they will as long continue to delight the descendants of the family by whom they are at present so highly valued, and so carefully preserved.

THE OAKS AT BURLEY.

This fine group of Oaks, twelve in number, of which a view is given in the title-page, stands on the lawn at Burley Lodge, New Forest, the property of Lord Bolton. The largest of them is seven yards and a half in circumference. They are known by the name of the Twelve Apostles, and perhaps this designation unconsciously adds to the feelings of reverence and regard which their venerable appearance, and their proximity to each other, as if drawn together by bonds of friendship, are calculated to inspire. There is a solemnity in a group of ancient trees that powerfully disposes the mind to serious thought, and carries it back to former ages:

> "It seems idolatry with some excuse
> When our forefather Druids in their oaks
> Imagined sanctity. The conscience, yet
> Unpurified by an authentic act
> Of amnesty, the meed of blood divine,
> Loved not the light, but, gloomy, into gloom
> Of thickest shades, like Adam after taste
> Of fruit proscribed, as to a refuge fled."
>
> COWPER.

Chardin, who published his travels in Turkey in the 17th century, remarks, that the religious Mahometans chose to pray under old trees, rather than in the neighbouring mosques: "They devoutly reve-

rence," says he, "those trees which seem to have existed during many ages; piously believing that the holy men of former times had prayed and meditated under their umbrageous shade." With such feelings to enhance their favourite gratification of reclining under the widely-spreading branches of some fine tree, no wonder they regard the destruction of one as an act of sacrilege.

The beautiful forest scenery with which the Oaks at Burley are surrounded on every side, predispose the lover of sylvan objects to be pleased with them, at the same time that they awaken in his breast an ardent desire to see every tree that bows its head to the earth, either by natural decay, by the fury of the elements, or the more furious and unpitying axe, replaced by a whole group of successors. "The value of timber," says Gilpin, "is its misfortune: every graceless hand can fell a tree." But the hand that fells an oak can likewise plant an acorn; and this restitution to mother earth is surely due from those who despoil her of her noblest and most ancient treasures, to satisfy some low necessity of the passing moment. Sir Robert Walpole planted with his own hands many of the magnificent trees which are now the pride of Houghton; and of all the actions of his busy life, this is the one which seems to have given him most gratification in the performance, and most pleasure in the retrospect. "Men," says Evelyn, "seldom plant trees till they begin to

be wise; that is, till they grow old, and find by experience the prudence and necessity of it." Cicero mentions planting as one of the most delightful occupations of old age, and it is indeed of all pursuits connected with the interests of mankind, one of the most nobly disinterested, yet the most truly wise. He who puts a sapling into the ground, is morally certain that he shall not live to enjoy the shade of its matured branches; but he enjoys it every day, and a thousand fold, in the thought, that the land, which to his predecessors had been only a barren waste, will present to his successors a scene of waving beauty, sheltering the surrounding country, and inviting many a devious step to explore its tangled haunts. This fine feeling of entering by proxy, as it were, into the interests and enjoyments of posterity, is most pleasingly expressed in the following lines, on an obelisk at the termination of a noble avenue in the park of Lord Carlisle, at Castle Howard in Yorkshire, and written by one of his ancestors:

"If to perfection these plantations rise,
If they agreeably my heirs surprise,
This faithful pillar will their age declare,
As long as Time these characters shall spare.
Here then with kind remembrance read his name
Who for posterity performed the same.

Charles, the 3d Earl of Carlisle,
of the family of the Howards.
Erected 1731."

It is impossible to read these lines, quaint and simple as they are, without being conscious of sentiments of respect towards the benevolent spirit by which they are dictated; and under that impression the very trees themselves seem to rise in prouder majesty, to fan the air more gracefully, and to offer a more refreshing shade, in grateful tribute to the memory of him by whose hand they were planted.

THE ELM.

Fœcundæ frondibus Ulmi.

VIRGIL.

IN the scale of precedence among Forest trees the Elm, which is indigenous to England, has a right, both with respect to beauty and utility, to claim a place next to the Oak in dignity and rank. One very important property, as regards the usefulness of its timber, is that of being able to bear the alternations of dryness and moisture, without rotting; which renders it more especially fit for all purposes connected with water, or exposure to the atmosphere. The hardness of its grain is another quality that adds to its value; nor ought its foliage to be forgotten; forming, as it may do, a substitute for hay and fodder, in times of scarcity: the Roman husbandman, indeed, frequently fed his cattle on the leaves of the Elm; hence Virgil reckons the redundancy of them among its excellencies.

No tree bears transplanting better than the Elm. It will suffer removal even at twenty years of age; which renders it very desirable for those who may wish to impart to new-built mansions the respectability which leafy shades, of apparently long standing, always confer on a habitation. The Elm is, indeed, peculiarly fitted for "the length of colonnade," with which our forefathers loved to make graceful and gradual entry to their hospitable halls. Loving society, yet averse from a crowd, delighting in fresh air, and in room to expand its roots, and affording its aid to all the weaker plants in its vicinity that may seek its support, it presents a pleasing emblem of the class of country gentlemen, whose abodes it is oftenest found to adorn and protect. Gilpin justly observes, that no tree is better adapted to receive grand masses of light than the Elm. In this respect it is superior, not only to the Oak and the Ash, but perhaps to every other tree; nor is its foliage, shadowing as it is, of the heavy kind: its leaves are small, and this gives it a natural lightness; it commonly hangs loosely and is in general very picturesque. It is likewise the first tree that salutes the early spring with its light and cheerful green, a tint which contrasts agreeably with the Oak, whose early leaf has generally more of the olive cast. They may be seen in fine harmony together in the beginning of May.

THE CHIPSTEAD ELM

stands on a rising ground, in a retired part of the pleasure-garden of George Polhill, Esquire, of Chipstead Place, in Kent. It is sixty feet high; twenty feet in circumference at the base; and fifteen feet eight inches, at three feet and a half from the ground. It contains two hundred and sixty-eight feet of timber; but this bulk is comparatively small to what it would have been, had it not sustained the loss of some large branches towards the centre. Its venerable trunk is richly mantled with ivy, and gives signs of considerable age; but the luxuriance of its foliage attest its vigour, and it is as fine a specimen of its species in full beauty as can be found.

It may not be amiss to remark in this place, that the Elm is peculiarly liable to injury from the attacks of insects of the beetle kind; one of which in particular, the *hylesinus destructor*, of Fabricius, or *scolytus destructor*, of Latreille, is peculiar to it, and is its most formidable enemy. Much valuable information is given on this subject by Mr. Maclery, in his "Report to the Treasury, on the State of the Elms in St. James's Park, in 1824," which may be found in the Edinburgh Philosophical Journal for July, in that year. After several excellent remarks on the ravages committed by certain insects on forest trees, in which he points out with great sagacity

the Chipstead Elm

the causes of those diseases among them that appear to be infectious, and often blight at once the plantations and the hopes of the planter: "Of the evil which is mentioned above in general terms," he proceeds to observe, "St. James's and Hyde Parks afford us at present too many examples. The elm-trees in both, and particularly in St. James's Park, are rapidly disappearing; and unless decisive measures be soon taken to resist the progress of the contagion, we must not only expect every tree of this species to be destroyed in the Parks, but may have to regret the dissemination of the evil throughout the vicinity of London. In the year 1780, an insect of the same natural family as the *hylesinus destructor*, made its appearance in the pine-forests of the Hartz, and was neglected. In the year 1783, *whole forests had disappeared*, and, for want of fuel, an end was nearly put to the mining operations of that extensive range of country. At the present moment, also, the French Government is in alarm at the devastation committed in their arsenals, by an insect well known to naturalists, under the name of *lymexylon navale*. About ten years ago, the principal naval engineer at Toulon, M. de Cerisier, who happened to be conversant with entomology, discovered this insect in the dock-yards, and recommended certain precautions to be taken for the preservation of the timber there lodged. The French Government objected to the expense requisite for

obviating an evil, of which, as yet, they had no experience ; and now, when perhaps it is too late, the minister of marine has determined to follow M. de Cerisier's advice. It is from such instances that we perceive the truth of an observation made by a French academician, while alluding to the devastation which such insects may occasion : " L'histoire de ces animaux mérite d'être connue, à raison de son extrême importance, de tous les grands propriétaires, et surtout par les inspecteurs généraux de nos forêts ; elles ont aussi leurs insectes destructeurs ; et ils verroient combien de causes, qui dans le principe ne fixent au moment l'attention, peuvent par négligence devenir funestes à l'Etat."

THE CRAWLEY ELM

stands in the village of Crawley, on the high road from London to Brighton. It is a well-known object to all who are in the habit of travelling that way, and arrests the eye of the stranger at once by its tall and straight stem, which ascends to the height of seventy feet, and by the fantastic ruggedness of its wildly-spreading roots. Its trunk is perforated to the very top, measuring sixty-one feet in circumference at the ground, and thirty-five feet round the inside, at two feet from the base.

In former ages it would have constituted a fit

Great Elm at Cranbury, Sussex

retreat for a Druid, whence he might have dispensed his sacred oracles; or in later times for a hermit, who might have sat within the hollow stem with

"His few books, or his beads, or maple dish,"

and gazed on the stars as they passed over his head, without his reflections being disturbed by the intervention of a single outward object: but to the benevolent mind it gives rise to more pleasing ideas in its present state: lifting its tranquil head over humble roofs, which it has sheltered from their foundation, and affording, in the projections and points around its base, an inexhaustible source of pleasure to the train of village children who cluster like bees around it; trying their infant strength and courage in climbing its mimic precipices, whilst their parents recall, in their pastimes, the feelings of their own childhood; when, like them, they disported under the same boughs. It is such associations as these that render a well-known and favourite tree an object that no art can imitate; no substitute replace. It seems to live with us, and for us; and he who can wantonly destroy the source of so much innocent, and indeed exalted gratification, appears to commit an injury against a friend, which we find more difficulty in forgiving than one against ourselves. It would be impossible to see such a noble tree as the Crawley Elm felled without regret;—its aged head brought prostrate to the ground, its still green branches despoiled in the dust, its spreading roots

left bare and desolate. The old would miss it, as the object that brought back to them the recollections of their youth ; the young would lament for it, as having hoped to talk of it when they should be old themselves. The traveller who had heard of its beauty would look for it in vain, to beguile him on the road ; and the weary wanderer, returning to his long-left home, would scarcely know his paternal roof, when robbed of the shade of the branches which he had seen wave even before his cradle. A stately forest is one of the grandest sights in creation ; an insulated tree one of the most beautiful. In the deep recesses of a wood an aged tree commands a veneration, similar to that which we are early taught to feel towards the possessor of royalty, or the minister of religion ; but in a hamlet, or on a green, we regard it with the gentler reverence due to a parent, or the affection inspired by the presence of a long-tried friend.

THE ELMS AT MONGEWELL.

These noble trees are close to the residence of the late Bishop of Durham, at Mongewell in Oxfordshire, celebrated by Leland for its "faire woodes," and may serve to recall to the mind of the beholder Cowper's eulogium on shades so natural and delightful.

Elms at Mangewell Oxfordshire

"Our fathers knew the value of a screen
From sultry suns, and in their shaded walks
And long-protracted bowers enjoyed, at noon,
The gloom and coolness of declining day."

The principal tree among them is seventy-nine feet in height, fourteen in circumference, at three feet from the ground, sixty-five in extent of boughs, and contains two hundred and fifty-six feet of solid timber. About the centre of the group stands an urn with the following inscription:

To the Memory
Of my
Two Highly Valued Friends,
Thomas Tyrwhitt, Esq.
And
The Rev. C. M. Cracherode, M.A.

In this once favour'd walk, beneath these Elms,
Whose thicken'd foliage, to the solar ray
Impervious, sheds a venerable gloom,
Oft in instructive converse we beguiled
The fervid time which each returning year
To friendship's call devoted. Such things were;
But are, alas! no more.

S. DUNELM.

Pleasing as it always is to see worth and genius paying tribute to kindred associations, it is particularly so in the present instance, from the illustrious Prelate who, in these lines, hands down the names of his friends to posterity, and whom it was delightful to contemplate wandering, in his ninetieth

year, amidst shades with which he was almost coeval, and which in freshness and tranquillity afforded the most soothing emblems of his own green and venerable old age.

THE TUTBURY WYCH-ELM.

The Wych-Elm, or Wych Hazel, as it is sometimes called, from the resemblance that its leaves and young shoots bear to those of the Hazel, is a species of the Elm, which is valuable rather for the quantity of its timber than the quality of it. Since the long bow, for the making of which it was much esteemed in former times, has fallen entirely into disuse, its value is proportionably lessened. It is, however, a noble spreading tree, and grows occasionally to a prodigious size, as may be seen by Evelyn's account of one in Sir Walter Bagot's park, in the county of Stafford, "which," says he, "after two men had been five days felling, lay forty yards in length, and was, at the stool, seventeen feet diameter. It broke in the fall fourteen load of wood, forty-eight in the top; yielded eight pair of panes, eight thousand six hundred and sixty feet of boards and planks; the whole esteemed ninety-seven tons. This was certainly a goodly stick." The Tutbury Wych-Elm is thus mentioned by Shaw, in his history of Stafford-

The Tutbury Wych Elm.

shire:—"In the road leading from Tutbury to Rolleston is a very large and beautiful Wych-Elm, the bole of which is remarkably straight, thick, and lofty; having eight noble branches, the size of common trees, which spread their umbrageous foliage luxuriantly around, forming a magnificent and graceful feature, both in the near and distant prospect. This, if not at present, will, in a few years, be as great a curiosity in the vegetable world, as the famous Wych-Elm at Field, described by Doctor Plott."

"The trunk of this tree is twelve feet long, and sixteen feet nine inches in circumference, at the height of five feet from the ground; seven feet higher, the trunk divides into the "eight noble branches;" they are nearly fifty feet high, and extend between forty and fifty feet from the centre of the tree, which contains six hundred and eighty-nine cubic feet of timber. The interest that this beautiful object imparts to the spot on which it stands, is increased by the pleasing prospect of Tutbury Castle, which lifts its venerable remains in the distance, and awakens a train of interesting reflections, on the virtues of one of its earliest owners, "Time-honored Lancaster," and the vicissitudes to which it has been exposed, during the ages that have now left it only the vestige of what it was, in the days of feudal greatness.

THE WYCH ELM AT BAGOT'S MILL

is more distinguished by its beauty than its size. It is in such situations as the present, abounding in rural objects, each connected with another in harmony and fitness, that an insulated tree inspires reflections peculiarly pleasing. It seems the common property of all who raise their humble tenements within sight of its branches, and is one of the delightful ornaments of nature that the poorest cottager may enjoy and be proud of, as he sees the stranger stop to gaze at it. Perhaps there is no country in the world where an admiration of fine trees is so genuinely felt, or so generally diffused, through all ranks, as in England. "I am fond of listening," says a Transatlantic writer, long esteemed, and now domesticated among us, "to the conversation of English gentlemen on rural concerns; and of noticing with what taste and discrimination, and with what strong unaffected interest, they will discuss topics which, in other countries, are abandoned to mere woodmen or rustic cultivators. I have heard a noble earl descant on park and forest scenery with the science and feeling of a painter: he dwelt on the shape and beauty of particular trees on his estate, with as much pride and technical precision as though he had been

Wyer Elm, at Bacots. Mill

discussing the merits of statues in his collection. I found that he had even gone considerable distances to examine trees which were celebrated among rural amateurs; for it seems that trees, like horses, have their established points of excellence; and that there are some in England which enjoy very extensive celebrity among tree-fanciers, from being perfect in their kind. There is something nobly simple and pure in such a taste: it argues, I think, a sweet and generous nature to have this strong relish for the beauties of vegetation, and this friendship for the hardy and glorious sons of the forest. There is a grandeur of thought connected with this part of rural economy. It is, if I may be allowed the figure, the heroic line of husbandry. It is worthy of liberal, and free-born and aspiring men. He who plants an oak looks forward to future ages, and plants for posterity. Nothing can be less selfish than this. He cannot expect to sit in its shade, nor enjoy its shelter; but he exults in the idea, that the acorn which he has buried in the earth shall grow up into a lofty pile, and shall keep on flourishing and increasing, and benefiting mankind, long after he shall have ceased to tread his paternal fields. Indeed it is the nature of such occupations to lift the thoughts above mere worldliness. As the leaves of trees are said to absorb all noxious qualities of the air, and to breathe forth a purer atmosphere, so it seems to me as if they drew from us all sordid and

angry passions, and breathed forth peace and philanthropy. There is a serene and settled majesty in woodland scenery that enters into the soul, and dilates and elevates it, and fills it with noble inclinations. The ancient and hereditary groves, too, that embower this island, are most of them full of story. They are haunted by the recollections of great spirits of past ages, who have sought for relaxation among them from the tumult of arms, or the toils of states, or have wooed the muse beneath their shade. Who can walk, with soul unmoved, among the stately groves of Penhurst, where the gallant, the amiable, the elegant, Sir Philip Sidney passed his boyhood? or can look without fondness upon the tree that is said to have been planted on his birth-day? or can ramble among the classic bowers of Hagley? or can pause among the solitudes of Windsor Forest, and look at the oaks around, huge, gray, and time-worn, like the old castle-towers, and not feel as if he were surrounded by so many monuments of long-enduring glory? It is when viewed in this light, that planted groves, and stately avenues, and cultivated parks, have an advantage over the more luxuriant beauties of unassisted nature. It is that they teem with moral associations, and keep up the ever-interesting story of human existence. It is incumbent, then, on the high and generous spirits of an ancient nation, to cherish these sacred groves that surround their ancestral mansions,

and to perpetuate them to their descendants. Republican as I am by birth, and brought up as I have been in republican principles and habits, I can feel nothing of the servile reverence for titled rank, merely because it is titled; but I trust that I am neither churl nor bigot in my creed. I can both see and feel how hereditary distinction, when it falls to the lot of a generous mind, may elevate that mind into true nobility. It is one of the effects of hereditary rank, when it falls thus happily, that it multiplies the duties, and, as it were, extends the existence of the possessor. He does not feel himself a mere individual link in creation, responsible only for his own brief term of being. He carries back his existence in proud recollection, and he extends it forward in honorable anticipation. He lives with his ancestry and he lives with his posterity. To both does he consider himself involved in deep responsibilities. As he has received much from those that have gone before, so he feels bound to transmit much to those who are to come after him. His domestic undertakings seem to imply a longer existence than those of ordinary men; none are so apt to build and plant for future centuries, as noble-spirited men who have received their heritages from foregone ages."—Washington Irving.

THE BEECH.

——— Sylva domus, cubilia frondes.
The wood a house, the leaves a bed.

JUVENAL.

THERE is no tree with which more classical and pleasing associations are connected, than the Beech; the very mention of it recalls Virgil's

"Tityre, tu, patulæ recubans sub tegmine fagi,
Silvestrem tenui Musam meditaris avena:"

and a thousand images of rural life, of rustic lovers carving their mistresses' names on its silver bark, of tuneful shepherds disputing for bowls of its wood, as curiously carved, and almost as much valued as if of precious metal, all spring into the imagination.

The Beech, however, has more solid claims on admiration than those which merely affect the fancy. It is a profitable as well as a beautiful tree; for though its wood, on account of being exceedingly subject to the ravages of the worm, is not so fit as the

Elm or Walnut for purposes where durability is requisite, it is yet much used for household furniture, and instruments of husbandry, and, when kept under water, is little inferior in ship-building to the Elm itself. The Beech will grow in the most stony and barren soils; and as a shelter in exposed situations it is particularly desirable, on account of retaining its glittering leaves till the very end of autumn, and indeed many of them throughout the winter; their delicate green gradually changing to modest brown, then to glowing orange, and latest to the more appropriate red. In the spring its foliage, feathering almost to the ground, is exquisitely beautiful; and its fantastic roots, immortalised by Gray, in his celebrated Elegy, are frequently covered with wild flowers. "About the end of September, when the leaf begins to change, it forms a happy contrast with the Oak whose foliage is yet verdant, and we shall find the finest opposition of tint which the forest can furnish, arise from the union of the oak and the beech." Swine, deer, and the smaller quadrupeds, tenants of the hollow trees, such as the squirrel, mouse, and dormouse, greedily fatten upon its mast, which is likewise capable of being converted into bread and oil for the human race; its leaves afford the most agreeable matrasses, continuing sweet and tender for seven or eight years together, and are eulogised by Evelyn, from his own experience, for their refreshing softness. It must,

however, be acknowledged, that its shades are more favourable to the traveller and the shepherd, than to vegetation; and that it is of that encroaching and dominant nature, that a wood which may have been originally in equal proportions of Oak and Beech, will in course of time become entirely beechen.

THE GREAT BEECH IN WINDSOR FOREST,

near Sawyer's Gate, in the neighbourhood of Sunning Hill, presents remains of surpassing grandeur, and evidently of great antiquity. "Its rugged projections and twisted roots give it, on one side, the appearance of some rude mass of broken architecture; whilst on the other it is entirely hollow, and surrounded by lofty and aged trees, spreading their dark umbrageous arms, as if to hide the access to it: insomuch that one coming suddenly upon the sequestered spot in remoter times, might have imagined that he had ventured unawares within the precincts of some marauder's cave; or intruded, perchance, on some holy anchorite's retreat. Many, indeed, are the delightful scenes of contemplation that this magnificent and truly regal forest affords. Many are the aged oaks and spreading beeches, that seem to speak of the days

Beech in Windsor Forest

of Arthur with his knights; of William the Norman; of the third Edward; of his peerless son, the Black Prince; of his illustrious captive, John of France; and of characters blazoned in the page of later histories, that have rested beneath their shade. Nor can these noble forest scenes fail to be still more pleasing to those who recreate themselves among them in the present day, from the consideration that they give added beauty and variety to an abode fitly chosen for the favoured residence of royalty; and to which, the elegant description by Camden will be found to apply as aptly at the present moment, as when it was first written:

"From a high hill," says he, "which riseth with a gentle ascent, it overlooketh a vale lying out far and wide, garnished with corn fields, flourishing with meadows, decked with groves on either side, and watered with the most mild and calm river Thames. Behind it arise hills every where, neither rough nor over-high; attired with woods; and even dedicated, as it were, by nature, to hunting and game."—DELICIÆ SYLVARUM, p. 2.

To this beautiful assemblage of natural images, set forth in the truth of prose, not even the poetical numbers of Pope can give additional attraction.

"Here waving groves a chequer'd scene display,
And part admit, and part exclude the day:
There interspersed in lawns and opening glades
Thin trees arise that shun each other's shades.

"And as they bow their hoary tops relate,
In murm'ring sounds, the dark decrees of Fate;
While visions, as poetic eyes avow,
Cling to each leaf, and swarm on every bough."

"At the foot of one of these squats me I, (*il Penseroso*) and there grow to the trunk for a whole morning. The timorous hare and sportive squirrel gambol around me like Adam in Paradise, before he had an Eve; but I think he did not use to read Virgil, as I commonly do there." It is easy to recognise in this description the same feelings and observations afterwards depicted in the portrait of "A youth to fortune and to fame unknown," of whom the writer says, in his celebrated Elegy,

"There at the foot of yonder nodding beech,
That wreathes its old fantastic roots so high,
His listless length at noon-tide would he stretch,
And pore upon the brook that bubbles by."

Here indeed the beech, so celebrated by poets, reigns in undivided sovereignty, scarcely admitting an oak to share its domain, so that we may easily imagine how it must have overrun the country before the opposing influence of agriculture was known; indeed we are told by old historians, the county was rendered impassable by the thickness of its woods, and the shelter they afforded for marauders and thieves, until several of them were cut down by Leofstan, Abbot of St. Alban's.—DELICIÆ SYLVARUM, page 7.

THE ASH.

Fraxinus in Sylvis pulcherrima.

VIRGIL.

THE Ash, from the lightness of its foliage, the graceful sweep of its branches, and the silvery appearance of its stem, has been called the Venus of the Forest; nor is it less admirable for utility than for beauty, as there is no timber, excepting that of the Oak, that is more generally in use. It is extremely profitable to the planter, as it will grow well in almost any soil, but its shade is accounted unfavourable to vegetation, and as it casts its leaves early, and displays them late, it is less desirable for avenues and pleasure-grounds; though when it is in fine foliage, there is no tree more beautiful.

THE GREAT ASH AT WOBURN

stands in the Park of His Grace the Duke of Bedford, about a quarter of a mile from the mansion, and is an extraordinary specimen of the size which

Great Ash at Woburn

this tree will attain in favourable situations. It is ninety feet high, from the ground to the top of its branches; and the stem alone is twenty-eight feet. It is twenty-three feet six inches in circumference on the ground, twenty at one foot, and fifteen feet three inches at three feet from the ground. The circumference of its branches is one hundred and thirteen feet in diameter; and the measurable timber in the body of the tree, is three hundred and forty-three feet; and in the arms and branches, one of which is nine feet in circumference, five hundred and twenty-nine; making altogether eight hundred and seventy-two feet of timber. It is in mountain scenery that the ash appears to peculiar advantage; waving its slender branches over some precipice which just affords it soil sufficient for its footing, or springing between crevices of rock, a happy emblem of the hardy spirit which will not be subdued by fortune's scantiness. It is likewise a lovely object by the side of some crystal stream, in which it views its elegant pendent foliage, bending, Narcissus-like, over its own charms. The Ash was held in great veneration by the ancients: insomuch that Hesiod, the oldest of poets, derives his brazen men from it; and the Edda assigns the same origin to all the human race. Nor is there any tree to which poetry or superstition has attached more legendary incidents, or more miraculous powers.

THE CHESNUT.

THE Chesnut is indigenous to England, and will thrive in almost any soil and any situation. In variety of usefulness its timber equals, and in some respects excels that of the Oak. Its luxuriance of foliage and feathered stems, render it conspicuous among all other trees for beauty; and its fruit might, by proper management, be made a valuable article of food in this country, as it is in France and Italy, where it is subjected to a variety of culinary processes, that convert it into delicacies for the tables of the luxurious, and into nutritious bread for the humbler classes.

The Chesnut sometimes grows to a prodigious size. Evelyn speaks of one in Gloucestershire, which contained "within the bowels of it, a pretty wainscoted room, enlightened with windows, and furnished with seats, &c.; but the largest known in the world is upon Mount Etna, in Sicily. This

tree, which goes by the name of *Castagno de Cento Cavalli,* is described by Brydone, who went to see it through five or six miles of almost impassable forests, growing out of the lava, as having the appearance of five large trees growing together; but upon a more accurate examination, strengthened by the assurances of scientific persons, he became inclined to believe that they had been formerly united in one solid stem, and on measuring the hollow space within, he found it two hundred and four feet round: Carrera's assertion, that there was wood enough in that one tree to build a large palace, can therefore scarcely be regarded as an exaggeration.

The chesnut flourishes abundantly amidst the mountains of Calabria; hence it is that we find it always forming a prominent feature in the bold and rugged landscapes of Salvator Rosa, who drew several of his most striking scenes from the wild haunts and natural fastnesses of that romantic country, wherein he passed so many of his youthful days. The chesnut appears to have been more plentiful in former times in this country than it is at present. Many of the most ancient houses in London were built of its wood, as is the roof of Westminster Hall, built by William Rufus in the year 1099, still free from any appearance of decay, and one of the finest productions, in its kind, of human art, in point of size, beauty, strength, and durability. Of late years, however, the attention of planters has been turned

more to the cultivation of the chesnut; and as it is highly ornamental whilst growing, is early capable of being converted into excellent timber, and quarrels which no soil assigned to it, it is on every account deserving of encouragement.

THE TORTWORTH CHESNUT

is probably the oldest tree now standing in England. It is brought forward in evidence by Dr. Ducarel, in his contest with Daines Barrington, respecting the Chesnut being a native of Britain, as a proof that it is indigenous. In the reign of Stephen, who ascended the throne in 1135, it was deemed so remarkable for its size, that, as appears upon record, it was well known as a signal boundary to the manor of Tortworth, in Gloucestershire, where it stands, and is mentioned as such by Evelyn, in his Sylva, b. iii. c. 3. At the time that it was thus conspicuous for its magnitude and vigour, we may reasonably suppose it to have been in its prime: if therefore, we pay any regard to the received opinion which is applied to the Chesnut, equally with the Oak, that it is three hundred years in coming to perfection, this calculation takes us back to the beginning of the reign of Egbert, in the year 800, for the commencement of the existence of the Tortworth Chesnut. Since that epoch above a thou-

The Tortworth Chesnut.

sand years have rolled over its yet green head. How is it possible, bearing this reflexion in our minds, to look upon its gigantic trunk, and widely-spreading arms, without feelings of reverence! How many, not merely generations of men, but whole nations, have been swept from the face of the earth, whilst, winter after winter, it has defied the howling blasts with its bare branches, and spring after spring put forth its leaves again, a grateful shelter from the summer suns! Its tranquil existence, unlike that of the human race, stained by no guilt, chequered by no vicissitudes, is thus perpetually renewing itself; and, if we judge from the luxuriance of its foliage, and the vigour of the branches which encircle the parent stem in wild profusion, may be prolonged for as many more centuries as it has already stood. Nor is it solitary in its old age. Its progeny rises around it, and its venerable roots are nearly hidden by the lighter saplings and bushes that have sought the protection of its boughs, making it appear a grove in itself—a fit residence for some sylvan deity, and realising Cowley's animated apostrophe:

"Hail, old patrician trees, so great and good!
Hail, ye plebeian underwood,
Where the poetic birds rejoice,
And for their quiet nests and plenteous food
Pay with their grateful voice.

"Here Nature does a house for me erect,—
Nature, the wisest architect,
Who those fond artists does despise
That can the fair and living trees neglect,
Yet the dead timber prize.

"Here let me, careless and unthoughtful lying,
Hear the soft winds above me flying,
With all their wanton boughs dispute,
And the more tuneful birds to both replying,
Nor be myself too mute."

It is only on approaching within the very limits overshadowed by its spreading branches, that the size of this majestic tree can be duly estimated; but when its full proportions are fairly viewed on all sides, it strikes the beholder with feelings of wonder and admiration, alike for its bulk and for the number of centuries which it has been in attaining it.

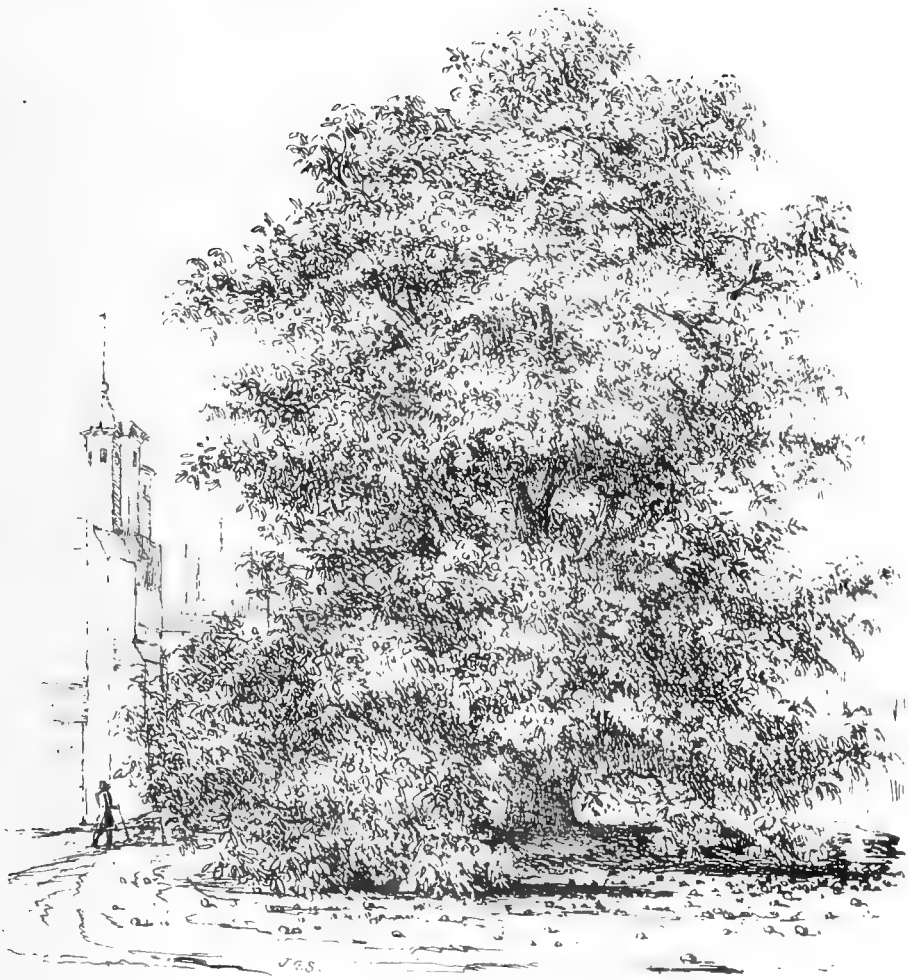
When we consider how beautiful and interesting an object a magnificent tree is in itself, how proud an ornament it forms to the spot whereon it flourishes—an ornament not to be equalled by any edifice reared by human hands; how incontestable a witness it bears to the ancient riches or honours of those on whose estates it may for ages have been cherished and preserved; it might be imagined, that such as are fortunate enough to possess any remarkable treasures of this description in their parks or forests, would at least be as studious to retain them, as to amass other curiosities of nature or of art,

which may be of comparatively short duration: yet the Tortworth Chesnut does not appear to have been treated with the respect due to its age and magnitude, or the care desirable for its continuance. It is only within a few years that it has been relieved from the pressure of three walls, in the angle of which it stood, and which must have greatly injured the spreading of its roots. The axe which might have been commendably employed in clearing the approach to it of brambles and briers, has, on the contrary, been barbarously, though not recently, applied to the tree itself; which has been wantonly despoiled of several large limbs on the north-east side, apparently many years ago; it is in consequence much decayed on that side, whilst on the others it is still sound. The Tortworth Chesnut, in 1766, measured fifty feet in circumference, at five feet from the ground. Its present measurement, at the same height, is fifty-two feet. The body is ten feet in height, to the fork, where it divides into three limbs, one of which, at the period already mentioned, measured twenty-eight feet and a half in girth, at the distance of five feet from the parent stem. The solid contents, according to the customary method of measuring timber, is one thousand nine hundred and sixty-five feet; but its true geometrical contents must be much more. Young trees are now nursing from the nuts which it bore three years ago; and it

is to be hoped that their pedigree will be preserved, as none can boast more ancient ancestry.

THE HORSE CHESNUT AT BURLEIGH.

The Horse Chesnut, we are informed by Evelyn, was first brought from Constantinople to Vienna; thence into Italy, and so to France; but more immediately to us from the Levant. It is probable that its introduction into England took place about the year 1500; and so well has it liked its naturalization, that it at present forms one of the chief ornaments of our groves and parks. To the painter the magnificence of its stature, and the beauty of its broad palmated leaves, and long pendent spikes of flowers scarcely atone for the exceeding regularity of its form, terminating, as it invariably does, when left to the hand of nature, in an exact parabola. Yet in the following description of it we can scarcely wish for any thing to be altered: "On reaching the village green, we cannot choose but pause before this stately Chesnut Tree, the smooth stem of which rises from the earth like a dark-coloured marble column, seemingly placed there by art to support the pyramidal fabric of beauty that surmounts it. It has just put forth its first series of rich fan-like leaves, each family of which is crowned by its



Horse Chesnut at Burleigh.

splendid spiral flower; the whole at this period of the year forming the grandest vegetable object that our kingdom presents, and vying in rich beauty with any that Eastern woods can boast. And if we could reach one of those flowers to pluck it, we should find that the most delicate fair ones of the garden or the green-house do not surpass it in elaborate penciling and richly-varied tints. It can be likened to nothing but its own portrait painted on velvet."—*Mirror of the Months*, p. 69.

In the extraordinary specimen of this tree, which is to be seen in the Court-yard of Burleigh House, the ancient and highly-interesting seat of the Marquess of Exeter, all its beauties will be found exhibited in their utmost perfection, without the drawback of a single disadvantage. From being enclosed in a space comparatively confined, the formality of its summit is exchanged for increased length of stem; the tree having shot up unusually high, most likely in the endeavour to lift its head above the surrounding walls, which at once shelter it from injury, and impede that free play of the elements in which the "native burghers of the forest" naturally delight. Its branches, feathering down to the velvet turf on which it stands, exhibit a delightful alternation of milk-white flowers and russet fruits; whilst the stately trunk displays an elegance and majesty, which, combined with the venerable turrets that rise around, filling the mind with recollections of the

Cecils and the Burleighs of former ages, render it an object not to be looked upon without exciting feelings in which tranquillity and admiration are most pleasingly united.

The height of this fine tree is sixty feet, its circumference at four feet from the ground is ten feet; it contains three hundred feet of solid timber, and its branches extend over an area of sixty-one feet in diameter.

ANCIENT CHESNUT AT COBHAM.

This tree, called the Four Sisters, from its four branching stems closely combined in one massive trunk, stands in the Heronry, in the finely wooded Park at Cobham Hall, the ancient seat of the illustrious family of that name, so well known in English History, and now the property of John fourth Earl of Darnley. It is the noble remains of a most magnificent tree; and though its head has paid forfeit to the "skiey influences" during a long succession of revolving seasons, yet it is not left entirely stripped of ornament in its old age; as a number of tender shoots spring out of its topmost branches, and still give it, by the lightness of their foliage, an appearance of freshness, of which its aged trunk would almost forbid the expectation. It is thirty-five feet two inches in circumference at the

Ancient Chesnut at Cobham.

ground, avoiding the spurs; twenty-nine feet, at three feet from the ground; thirty-three feet at twelve feet from the ground, and forty feet at the point where the trunk divides. On looking at a tree of this magnitude and antiquity, it is natural that we should desire to know its exact age; but this is a point always of difficult and uncertain determination, unless some historical fact should give it chronological precision. The common mode of judging by the number of solar revolutions, or circles occasioned by the bark of the preceding season being digested and compacted into a ligneous substance, and afterwards invested with a succeeding coat, which is the next year to be converted in the same manner into the substantial wood, is liable to inaccuracy, on account of the earlier portion of the rings becoming absorbed and indistinct by age; nor is the scale of comparison, with other trees of the same species, more satisfactory; for, as it has been remarked, the lives and stature of trees, like those of animals, must vary with the situations in which they are placed, and the accidents to which they may be exposed. In general, the trees which in the end obtain the greatest size, are the slowest in growth; it may therefore reasonably be inferred that the age of our largest trees is often far beyond that assigned to them by obscure tradition or vague conjecture; and it is not improbable that the "Four Sisters" may have attained their tenth century.

THE FALLEN CHESNUT.

In Cobham Park, not far from the Four Sisters, is one of those accidents of nature so pleasing to a painter to meet with in his rambles, and so well calculated to tempt the poetical imagination to moralise the spectacle "into a thousand similes." "Delighting thus in trees," says an elegant writer, who has withheld his name from the respect his genius would secure to it, "I must more than others grieve for their loss, and a storm awakens in me almost the fears of those whose friends are mariners. I dread to see the shivered tops and the scattered boughs. The great tree torn up by its roots, lying in gigantic length, along the ground it yesterday shaded, rending the green-sward into an unsightly broken mound, showing the strong hold in the earth which it had firmly grappled, now broken and for ever destroyed—is to me a sight the most mournful: it seems to me almost the overthrow of a living being of power and might, so long had it stood erect and nobly immoveable in the war of elements. The pride of its foliage, the majesty of its leafy head, now low in the dust, are indeed piteous to beheld. The storms it has so often braved, at last prevail, and by one dread gust it falls before the breath of heaven." With equal feeling, and still more strength,

Chesnut at Cobham

does Evelyn describe the effects of the lawless winds which, on the 26th November, 1703, levelled at once two thousand noble denizens of his beloved woods to the earth, almost within sight of his own dwelling. "In the mean while," says he, "as the fall of a very aged oak, giving a crack like thunder, has been often heard at many miles distance, constrained though I often am to fell them with reluctance, I do not at any time remember to have heard the groans of those nymphs, grieving to be dispossessed of their ancient habitations, without some emotion and pity. Methinks that I still hear, sure I am that I still feel, the dismal groans of our forests; that late dreadful hurricane having subverted so many thousands of goodly oaks, prostrating the trees, laying them in ghastly postures, like whole regiments, fallen in battle by the sword of the conqueror, and crushing all that grow beneath them." There is one reflection that the sight of a tree thus laid low by Him whose "wind bloweth where it listeth," must suggest to the religious mind, that whether it "fall toward the south or toward the north, in the place where the tree falleth, there shall it lie;" and if we bring this reflection properly home to ourselves, and to our own eternal state, as fixed on the same irrevocable principle, we may indeed congratulate ourselves on finding

> "——— tongues in trees, books in the running brooks,
> Sermons in stones, and good in everything."

THE LIME TREE.

"The Lime, at dewy eve,
Diffusing odours."

The Lime Tree, or Linden, is said to have been introduced into England from Germany in the reign of Elizabeth, by Sir John Spelman, to whom we are also indebted for the introduction of the manufactory of paper. It is not, however, so much cultivated in this as in many other countries, particularly in Germany and Switzerland, where there are some of the largest in the world; and in Holland, where they not only shelter and adorn the highways, but are planted in many towns in even lines before the houses, throughout the streets, filling the air with the fragrance of their blossoms, and screening the passengers from the sun, with the luxuriance of their shade. It is peculiarly adapted for avenues, from the straightness of its stem, and the luxuriant spreading of its branches, which are likewise so tough as to withstand the fury of gales that would

dismember most other trees. The red-twigged Lime is preferable for this purpose in point of beauty, on account of the pleasing spectacle which the red twigs afford in the absence of its leaves.

The Lime Tree can accommodate itself to almost any kind of ground; but in a rich loamy soil it grows with almost incredible swiftness, and spreads to an amazing size. Evelyn thus describes some of the giants of this species: "But here does properly intervene the Linden of Schalouse in Swisse, under which is a bower composed of its branches, capable of containing three hundred persons sitting at ease: it has a fountain set about with many tables, formed only of the boughs, to which they ascend by steps, all kept so accurately, and so very thick that the sun never looks into it. But this is nothing to that prodigious Tilia of Neustadt, in the Duchy of Wirtemberg, so famous for its monstrosity, that even the city itself receives a denomination from it, being called by the Germans *Neustadt ander grossen Linden*, or Neustadt by the great Lime Tree. The circumference of the trunk is twenty-seven feet four fingers; the ambitus, or extent of the boughs, four hundred and three *ferè;* the diameter from south to north one hundred and forty-five, from east to west one hundred and nineteen feet; set about with divers columns and monuments of stone, (eighty-two in number at present, and formerly above a hundred more,) which several Princes and Noble Persons

have adorned, and celebrated with inscriptions, arms and devices; and which, as so many pillars, serve likewise to support the umbrageous and venerable boughs; and that even the tree had been much ampler, the ruins and distances of the columns declare, which the rude soldiers have greatly impaired."—DISCOURSE ON FOREST TREES, p. 493. edit. 1776.

Leaving, however, these "monstrosities," as Evelyn styles them, we may turn with perhaps more real interest to the beautiful specimen of

THE LIME TREE IN MOOR PARK,

Hertfordshire, the family seat of Robert Williams, Esq.; a place venerable for its antiquity, and familiar to the lovers of gardening, by Sir William Temple's eulogium on it, as affording in his time the most perfect combination of garden elegance and utility in England. This tree, standing upon a little eminence, finely terminates a row of stately Limes which bound one side of the Park, for more than three quarters of a mile; all of which are more lofty, and some of larger girth than this; but none equalling it in luxuriance of shade, and redundancy of branches, nineteen of which, almost rivalling the parent stem, have, at about nine feet from the ground, struck out in horizontal lines to the length of from sixty-seven to seventy-one feet; and from

Lime Tree in [illegible]

six to eight feet in circumference; bearing again in their turn three or four upright limbs, like so many young trees, and reminding the beholder of prosperous colonies, at once supported by, and adding to the importance of their mother country. It must have been some such object that suggested to the fervid imagination of Milton his beautiful description of the fig-tree.

"——— Such as at this day (to Indians known,
In Malabar or Deccan,) spreads her arms
Branching so broad and long, that in the ground
The bended twigs take root, and daughters grow
About the mother-tree, a pillar'd shade
High over-arch'd, and echoing walks between:
There oft the Indian herdsman, shunning heat,
Shelters in cool and tends his past'ring herds
At loop-holes cut through thickest shade."

PARADISE LOST, B. 9, 1200.

The age of the Moor Park Lime-tree is not exactly known; but it is at this present period in the most vigorous state of luxurious growth, and has every promise of attaining a much larger size. Its circumference on the ground is twenty-three feet three inches; at three above, it is seventeen feet six inches; its branches extend one hundred and twenty-two feet in diameter, and cover three hundred and sixty feet in circumference. It is nearly a hundred feet in height, and contains, by actual measurement, eight hundred and seventy-five feet of saleable timber.

THE POPLAR.

Populus in fluviis.

VIRGIL.

THE Poplar may be classed among the aquatic trees, though it will grow exceedingly well on ground comparatively dry. There are many species of the Poplar, the chief of which are the white, the black, and the trembling, or aspen. Of these, the Black Poplar is the most scarce in England; it is oftener to be found in Cheshire and Suffolk, than in any other counties.

THE BLACK POPLAR AT BURY ST. EDMUNDS

may probably challenge competition, both in size and beauty, with any other individual of its kind in the kingdom. It stands near the old monastic bridge, which, with the little river Lark, that runs beneath it, reflecting the graceful branches of the Poplar in

Black Poplar at Bury St Edmunds.

its waters, forms an interesting picture, well calculated to attract the attention of the traveller, as he enters the town, by the road from Norwich.

The height of this tree is ninety feet, and its circumference, at a yard from the ground, fifteen; the trunk rises forty-five feet, with but little diminution in size, when it divides into a profusion of luxuriant branches: its solid contents are five hundred and fifty-one feet.

The Poplar may be regarded in every respect as a classical tree. It was held sacred to Hercules by the ancients; and is celebrated by Homer, Virgil, and Ovid. The latter speaks of the transformation of the sisters of Phaëton into Poplars; and the fiction seems to wear almost the appearance of reality, from the number of those trees that still flourish on the banks of the Po in Italy, in the vicinity of the ancient Eridanus, into which the ambitious charioteer is said to have been precipitated by Jupiter. The Poplar, like other trees of the aquatic tribe, copiously exudes the moisture which it imbibes; insomuch that, in hot calm weather, its foliage, like that of the Willow, is additionally grateful from the drops of water that hang upon its leaves, with the refreshing coolness of a summer shower; and which, to a poetical imagination, like that of Ovid, affords a lively picture of the tears of Phaëton's sisters for his loss, completing the beauty of the story which relates their metamorphosis.

THE ABBOT'S WILLOW

is of the species termed by botanists *Salix Alba*, and is probably for size and age unequalled in the kingdom. It stands in the grounds of John Benjafield, Esq. at Bury St. Edmund's, on a part of the ancient demesne of the Abbot of Bury, and which was in the actual possession of the Monastery, at the time of its dissolution.

The author of that most pleasing work intitled "The Journal of a Naturalist," observes that "the Willow is so universally subjected to pollarding, that probably few persons have ever seen a willow tree. At any rate, a sight of one grown unmutilated from the root is a rare occurrence. The few that I have seen constituted trees of great beauty." One, in particular, in the meadows on the right of the Spa House at Gloucester, he remarks, is so healthy and finely grown that it deserves every attention, and should be preserved as a unique specimen; an example of what magnitude this despised race may attain when suffered to proceed in its own unrestrained vigour."—p. 398.

From the uncommon size of this tree, and its being called "The Abbot," conjecture may lead us to suppose that it was planted previously to the dispersion

Willow at Bury St. Edmund's.

of the members of the far-famed and splendid monastery, which took place in the reign of Henry VIII. Of this, however, there is no certain proof; but its vast dimensions plainly indicate it to have been the growth of centuries. Notwithstanding the great space its spreading branches occupy, it has hitherto suffered but little, either from wind or time, nor does it at present exhibit any symptoms of decay. The soil around is certainly of a nature genial to this class of aquatic trees; for which, as Evelyn observes, a bank at a foot distance from the water, is kinder than a bog, or to be altogether immersed in the water; "for they love not to wet their feet," and last the longer for being kept moderately dry: nevertheless, the Abbot's Willow may owe some of its freshness and vigour to a part of its roots communicating with the bed of a small adjoining river, the Lark, on whose bank it stands, in the vicinity of the Botanic Garden: an establishment to which the town and neighbourhood of Bury St. Edmund's are indebted for some of the most elegant and instructive of their recreations, through the exertions of Nathaniel Hodson, Esq., its proprietor; a gentleman whose diligent research in botanical science, and general taste in all branches of natural history, are already well known to the public.

The measurements of this tree, as taken by Mr. Lenny, an able and accurate Surveyor at Bury, are as follows: Its height is seventy-five feet: the cir-

cumference of the stem eighteen feet six inches. The two principal limbs are fifteen and twelve feet in circumference; the ambitus of the boughs is two hundred and four feet; and it contains four hundred and forty feet of solid timber.

"The Weeping Willow," says Gilpin, "is a very picturesque tree. It is not, however, adapted to sublime subjects. We wish it not to skreen the broken buttresses and gothic windows of an abbey, nor to overshadow the battlements of a ruined castle. These offices it resigns to the oak, whose dignity can support them. The weeping willow seeks a humbler scene, some romantic footpath bridge, which it half conceals, or some glassy pool, over which it hangs its streaming foliage,

——————————— and dips
Its pendent boughs, stooping as if to drink.

In these situations it appears in character, and of course to advantage. Some willows, indeed, I have thought beautiful, and fit to appear in the decoration of any rural scene. The kind I have most admired has a small narrow leaf, and wears a pleasant light sea-green tint, which mixes agreeably with foliage of a deeper hue. I believe the botanists call it the *Salix Alba*."—Remarks on Forest Scenery, Vol. I. p. 67.

THE CEDAR.

The Cedar proud and tall.

SPENSER.

THE Cedar of Lebanon has been generally supposed to be a native of Mount Libanus only; but modern travellers have found it on Mount Taurus and other elevated situations in the Levant, and it is so hardy, that it can easily adapt itself to any climate. It has not been much cultivated in England till of late years; although its quick growth, and its capability of thriving in a meagre soil, renders it peculiarly desirable for those bleak and barren situations which have hitherto been principally devoted to the Fir.

The frequent and solemn allusions to the Cedar of Holy Writ, seem to give it something of a sacred character; which is increased by a knowledge of the esteem in which it was held by the ancients, on account of its fragrant scent, its incorruptible nature, and above all, its durability, insomuch that it is re-

corded, that in the temple of Apollo at Utica, there was found timber of Cedar nearly two thousand years old.

It entered largely into the construction of the most celebrated buildings of antiquity; and in the glorious temple of Solomon it seems to have been recorded of it, as one of its proudest boasts, that "all was cedar; there was no stone seen."

THE ENFIELD CEDAR

stands in the garden of the Manor House, or old Palace in Enfield, the occasional retirement of Queen Elizabeth before she came to the throne, and the frequent scene of her royal pleasures afterwards, in the early part of her reign. In the year 1660 it became the residence of the learned Doctor Uvedale, Master of the Grammar School of Enfield at that time, and famous for his curious gardens and choice collection of exotics. The Cedar, which is now perhaps the largest in the kingdom, was put into the ground by him, a plant brought direct from Mount Libanus. In 1779 it measured fourteen feet six inches at the base, and forty-five feet nine inches in height, eight feet of the upper part having been broken off by a high wind in 1703. The principal branches extended in length from the stem, from twenty-eight to forty-five feet, and the contents of the tree, ex-

Cedar at Enfield.

clusive of the boughs, was about two hundred and ninety-three cubic feet. In the night of the fifth of November, 1794, it again suffered by a high wind, which, blowing furiously from the north-west, deprived it of the principal top-branch, which fell with a tremendous crash, and injured several of the branches below in its fall. In 1821, Dr. May, its present proprietor, and the able Master of the Grammar School at Enfield, took its measurement, which was as follows: seventeen feet in circumference at one foot from the ground, sixty-four feet in perpendicular height, and containing five hundred and forty-eight cubic feet of timber, exclusive of the branches, which from north-east to south-west extend eighty-seven feet, and contain about two hundred and fifty feet of timber, making in the whole nearly eight hundred cubic feet of timber.

Some years ago, this great ornament to Enfield was destined to be cut down by a gentleman who had purchased the spot on which it stood; but the contemplation of its loss excited so much regret and discontent among several of the most respectable inhabitants in the place, that he was obliged to relinquish the barbarous design, even after the trench was dug around it, the saw-pit prepared, and the axe almost lifted up for its destruction. An account of the whole proceeding, as well as a very minute one of the tree itself, is to be found in Mr. Robinson's valuable and interesting History of Enfield.

THE GREAT CEDAR AT HAMMERSMITH.

This magnificent tree has every way a claim to the title of Great, being at this time one of the largest, the stateliest, and the most flourishing in the kingdom. Its stem, at the ground, is sixteen feet six inches in circumference, its height is fifty-nine feet, and its branches cover an area of eighty feet in diameter. When it is in the full prime of its summer foliage, waving its rich green arms to the gentle breezes, and hiding the small birds innumerable in its boughs, it affords a fine exemplification of the sublime description of the Prophet Ezekiel, in his comparison of the glory of Assyria, in her "most high and palmy state:"

"Behold, the Assyrian was a cedar in Lebanon with fair branches, and with a shadowing shroud, and of an high stature, and his top was among the thick boughs. The waters made him great, the deep set him up on high, with her rivers running round about his plants, and sent out her little rivers unto all the trees of the field.

"Therefore his height was exalted above all the trees of the field, and his boughs were multiplied, and his branches became long because of the multitude of waters, when he shot forth.

"All the fowls of heaven made their nests in his boughs, and under his branches did all the beasts of the field bring forth their young, and under his shadow dwelt all great nations.

"Thus was he fair in his greatness, in the length of his branches:

Cedar at Hammersmith House

for his root was by great waters. The cedars in the garden of God could not hide him: the fir-trees were not like his boughs, and the chesnut-trees were not like his branches; nor any tree in the garden of God was like unto him in his beauty.

"I have made him fair by the multitude of his branches: so that all the trees of Eden, that were in the garden of God, envied him."—c. 31.

A fertile imagination might be led to suppose that this noble tree had witnessed its princes, its heroes, and its statesmen, holding their councils, and forming their lofty projects under the shadow of its branches. The house, with which it may probably be coeval, and which appears to belong to the Elizabethan order of architecture, was in later times the residence of Oliver Cromwell, during the period of the Protectorate; and some who, dazzled by the glare of false greatness, confound striking incidents with grand ones, have been anxious to inspire additional respect for the venerable walls, by assigning to them the unenviable distinction of having had the death-warrant of Charles the First signed within them. Very different, at this time, are the pursuits carried on, the consultations held in its once stately council chamber. The house has been, the last half century, devoted to the purposes of education: fair and youthful forms supply the places of sour-visaged Puritans, and lank-haired Roundheads; mandates and treaties are turned into exercises and themes; and though the Cedar may still be made occasionally

the confidant of whispered plans of future greatness, or visionary happiness, it is to be hoped it will never again listen to the schemes of guilty ambition, or the sighs of fruitless remorse.

THE CEDARS IN THE APOTHECARIES' GARDEN CHELSEA.

These trees were planted, according to Dr. Hunter, in his notes to Evelyn's Sylva, in 1683. In 1774 they had attained a circumference of twelve feet and a half, at two feet from the ground, while their branches extended over a circular space forty feet in diameter. Seven-and-twenty years afterwards the trunk of the largest one had increased more than half a foot in circumference: this shows the quickness of its growth in proportion to that of the Oak, which, in the same period, would probably not have made half that progress. Dr. Hunter speaks of the branches hanging down nearly to the ground, and affording thereby "a goodly shade in the hottest season of the year." At present, however, these pendent branches are so far "curtailed of their fair proportions" that they would afford no more shade than might be desired when the sun is just entering the vernal solstice; and indeed they have of late years altogether drooped and languished,

Cedars in the Apothecaries' Garden Chelsea

owing, it has been conjectured, to the filling-up of a neighbouring pond by which they were supposed to be formerly nourished: but this is scarcely probable, as the cedar naturally assimilates with a poor soil; and it is more likely that the real cause of the injury done to these fine trees, as well as to all the other productions of the spot on which they stand, a spot rendered almost classical ground by the name of its founder, Sir Hans Sloane, may be found in the pestiferous vapour of the numerous gas-works by which it is surrounded.

There is something in the air of the Cedar remarkably indicative of its comparatively immortal nature. The foliage is very beautiful: each branch is perfect in its form; the points of the leaves spread upwards into little tufts, feathering the whole upper surface of the branch, and drooping in graceful curves towards the extremity, whilst the colour exhibits a rich green, harmonizing between the blue tint of the pine and fir, and the lurid and gloomy one of the cypress. Its peculiarity in raising its boughs to support the load that may oppress them, is prettily alluded to by the late talented Mrs. Franklin:

"——————————— meek in power,
Her gentle spirit rose in danger's hour.
The cedar thus, when halcyon summer shines,
Graceful to earth its pendent boughs declines;
But when on Libanus the snows descend,
To meet the weight its rising branches bend."

THE PLANE TREE.

Virentis umbra sub platani.

CLAUDIAN.

THE Plane Tree is of comparatively modern introduction into this country, which is said to be indebted for it to the great Lord Chancellor Bacon, who probably procured the firstlings of the species from Sicily, into which Island it was transplanted from the Levant, and afterwards spread throughout Italy, of which it has ever since formed the coolest and most refreshing shades. It was held in the highest estimation by the ancient Greeks and Romans. We are told of Xerxes, that finding one of extraordinary beauty and dimensions, he halted his army to pitch his tent under its shade, bedecked it with a golden chain in token of his admiration, when he was compelled to proceed; and afterwards caused a golden medal to be struck, engraved with the image of the tree, and which he wore ever after, in remembrance of the pleasure he had felt in reposing

beneath its balmy and luxuriant foliage. Among the numerous acts of eccentricity attributed to Xerxes, this is perhaps the only one which can be dwelt upon with any view of placing his character in an advantageous light, as it at least shows him to have possessed a mind originally alive to the beauties of nature, and retaining, in the midst of all his luxury and excesses, sensibility enough to be affected by them.

Homer mentions a sacrifice under a beautiful Plane tree, καλῇ ὑπὸ πλατανίστῳ. The philosophical conversations of Socrates are represented as passing under its shade; and the academic groves, at the very mention of which Plato and his disciples rise to the enamoured fancy, were formed of its branches. The Romans thought their most magnificent villas imperfect unless they were sheltered by the lofty and wide-spreading plane; and the Turks, who treat it with extraordinary reverence, plant it near their dwellings, under the idea that it sheds a salutary influence over the noxious vapours by which the plague is generated. No part of Europe can show such gigantic Planes as those in the neighbourhood of Constantinople. They may be esteemed next to the Cedars of Lebanon in dignity and durability. The precise age that the Plane tree will attain, has never been exactly ascertained; but if we accept the testimony of Pausanias, who lived in the middle of the second century, we shall scarcely

assign it a shorter period of duration than the Oak; for he tells us of one in Arcadia of extraordinary size and beauty, supposed to have been planted by Menelaus, the husband of the beautiful Helen, about thirteen hundred years before the period when he describes it as being in so much luxuriance and vigour. There are two species of this tree, the Oriental and the Occidental: they both love the water, particularly the Occidental, which thrives rapidly by the side of a stream; and the size which they attain in those soils where they flourish best, introduces them to a still closer acquaintance with the element they are so fond of, by rendering their trunks fit for vessels and canoes, to which purpose they are frequently applied.

THE PLANE TREE AT LEE COURT,

near Blackheath, is a beautiful specimen of the Oriental kind. It waves its slender branches and light clustering leaves over the stream of a small rivulet, tempting the angler to seek its cooling shade; whilst within a few yards' distance, on the opposite bank, stands the ancient residence of the family of Bohun, thus described in the journal of Evelyn. "Went to visit our good neighbour Mr. Bohun, whose whole house is a cabinet of all elegancies, especially Indian: in the

hall are contrivances of Japan skreens instead of wainscot, and there is an excellent pendule clock, enclosed in the curious flower-work of Mr. Gibbons, in the middle of the vestibule. The landscapes of the skreens represent the manner of living, and country of the Chinese. But above all, his lady's cabinet is adorned, on the fret, ceiling, and chimney piece, with Mr. Gibbons' best carving. There are also some of Streeter's best paintings, and many curiosities of gold and silver, as growing in the mines. The gardens are exactly kept, and the whole place very agreeable and well watered." The tree itself is mentioned in a subsequent passage. "Sept. 16, 1683.—At the elegant villa and garden of Mr. Bohun's at Lee. He shewed me the Zinnar tree, or Platanus, and told me that since they had planted this kind of tree about the city of Ispahan in Persia, the plague, which formerly much infested the place, had exceedingly abated of its mortal effects, and rendered it very healthy."—*Evelyn's Memoirs*, Vol. I. p. 525. Lee Court remains at present much in the state in which it was during Evelyn's time; and the idea of this Plane tree having been examined by him with curiosity and interest, as one of the first introduced into this country, is sufficient to give it value in the eyes of all who are acquainted with his admirable genius and virtues, independent of the attraction which it may boast in its own beauty.—

The circumference of this tree at six feet from the ground is fourteen feet eight inches; it rises to the height of about sixty-five feet, and contains three hundred and one feet of timber.

It would be well if we could revive so much of the veneration of the ancients for the Plane, as might induce us, like them, to plant it round our Schools and new Universities: our tiros in philosophy might, by the powerful influence of association of ideas, inhale under its branches some of the lofty contemplations of their predecessors, practise themselves in the same habits of simplicity, and finally arrive at the same height of intellectual and moral excellence. Delightful indeed is it, as Horace says,

"Atque inter Sylvas Academi quærere verum."

Neither the studies of the young, nor the peaceful retreats of the aged, should ever be without those breathing temples, those

"Long living galleries of aged trees,"

favourable alike to learning and to religion.

"In such green palaces the first kings reign'd,
Slept in their shades, and angels entertain'd
With such old counsellors they did advise,
And by frequenting sacred groves grew wise.
Free from th' impediments of light and noise,
Man, thus retired, his nobler thoughts employs.

THE YEW.

"The warlike yew, by which more than the lance,
The strong-arm'd English spirits conquer'd France."

DRAYTON.

THE Yew was formerly much esteemed in England, when the cross-bow was in use. Spenser praises it as

"The Eugh obedient to the bender's will;"

and that it had merited the reputation for many centuries is evident from Virgil's mention of it for the same purpose:

"—— Ityræos Taxi torquentur in arcus."

But as the use of fire-arms has superseded that of the bow, and as the improvements in modern taste have equally exploded the formal hedges and fantastical figures, for which the Yew was highly prized by the gardeners in Queen Elizabeth's time, it is no longer cultivated as it was in former ages; when it was enjoined to be planted in all church-yards and

cemeteries: partly to insure its cultivation; partly to secure its leaves and seeds from doing injury to cattle; and partly because its unchanging foliage and durable nature made it a fit emblem of immortality; whilst, at the same time, its dark green rendered it not less aptly illustrative of the solemnity of the grave.

The Yew-tree lives to a great age: indeed it can scarcely ever be said to die, new shoots perpetually springing out from the old and withered stock.

THE YEW TREE AT ANKERWYKE,

near Staines, the seat of John Blagrove, Esq., is supposed to have flourished there upwards of a thousand years. Tradition says, that Henry VIII. occasionally met Anne Boleyn under the lugubrious shade of its spreading branches, at such times as she was placed in the neighbourhood of Staines, in order to be near Windsor; whither the king used to love to retire from the cares of state. Ill-omened as was the place of meeting under such circumstances, it afforded but too appropriate an emblem of the result of that arbitrary and ungovernable passion, which, overlooking every obstacle in its progress, was destined finally to hurry its victim to an untimely grave. It is more pleasing to view this tree as the silent witness of the conferences of those

Yew Tree at Ankerwyke.

brave barons who afterwards compelled King John to sign Magna Charta, in its immediate vicinity, between Runnymede and Ankerwyke House, than as the involuntary confidant of loves so unhallowed and so unblest as those of Henry and Anne Boleyn. Both events, however, are happily alluded to in the following lines :

" What scenes have pass'd, since first this ancient Yew
In all the strength of youthful beauty grew !
Here patriot Barons might have musing stood,
And plann'd the Charter for their Country's good ;
And here, perhaps, from Runnymede retired,
The haughty John, with secret vengeance fired,
Might curse the day which saw his weakness yield
Extorted rights in yonder tented field.
Here too the tyrant Henry felt love's flame,
And, sighing, breathed his Anna Boleyn's name :
Beneath the shelter of this Yew-tree's shade,
The royal lover woo'd the ill-starr'd maid :
And yet that neck, round which he fondly hung,
To hear the thrilling accents of her tongue ;
That lovely breast, on which his head reclined,
Form'd to have humanized his savage mind ;
Were doom'd to bleed beneath the tyrant's steel,
Whose selfish heart might doat, but could not feel.
O had the Yew its direst venom shed
Upon the cruel Henry's guilty head,
Ere England's sons with shuddering grief had seen
A slaughter'd victim in their beauteous queen !"

The girth of this tree, at three feet from the ground, is twenty-seven feet eight inches; at eight feet,

thirty-two feet five inches. Immediately above the latter height there are five principal branches, which shoot out from a stem in a lateral direction; the girth of which are, five feet five inches; six feet ten inches; five feet seven inches; five feet seven inches; and five feet nine inches. Above these branches, the trunk measures in the girth twenty feet eight inches. At twelve feet from the ground various branches proceed in every direction, aspiring to the height of forty-nine feet six inches; and spreading their umbrage to the circumference of two hundred and seven feet.

THE YEW TREES AT FOUNTAINS' ABBEY.

These venerable Yew Trees stand on a small eminence at Studley Royal, near Ripon, overlooking the ruins at Fountains' Abbey, which celebrated monastery was founded about the end of the year 1132, by Thurston, Archbishop of York, for certain Monks, whose consciences being too tender to allow them to indulge in the relaxed habits of their own order, made them desirous of following the more rigorous rule of the Cistercians, founded by the celebrated Saint Bernard, and then lately introduced into England. Of the origin of Fountains' Abbey, as the date of these Yew Trees is particularly con-

Yew Trees at Fountains Abbey

nected with it, the following account from Burton may not be deemed unacceptable:

"At Christmas, the Archbishop, being at Ripon, assigned to the Monks some land in the patrimony of St. Peter, about three miles west of that place, for the erecting of a monastery. The spot of ground had never been inhabited, unless by wild beasts, being overgrown with wood and brambles, lying between two steep hills and rocks, covered with wood on all sides, more proper for a retreat for wild beasts than the human species. This was called Skeldale, that is, the vale of Skell, a rivulet running through it from the west to the eastward part of it. The Archbishop also gave to them a neighbouring village called Sutton-Richard. The prior of St. Mary's at York was chosen Abbot by the Monks, being the first of this Monastery of Fountains; with whom they withdrew into this uncouth desert, without any house to shelter them in that winter season, or provisions to subsist on, but entirely depending on divine Providence. There stood a large Elm in the midst of the vale, on which they put some thatch or straw, and under that they lay, eat, and prayed; the bishop for a time supplying them with bread, and the rivulet with drink. Part of the day some spent in making wattles to erect a little oratory, whilst others cleared some ground to make a little garden. But it is supposed they soon changed the shelter of their Elm for that of seven Yew Trees

growing on the declivity of the hill on the south side of the Abbey, all standing at this present time, except the largest, which was blown down about the middle of the last century. They are of an extraordinary size; the trunk of one of them is twenty-six feet six inches in circumference, at the height of three feet from the ground, and they stand so near each other as to form a cover almost equal to a thatched roof. Under these trees, we are told by tradition, the Monks resided till they built the Monastery; which seems to be very probable, if we consider how little a Yew Tree increases in a year, and to what a bulk these are grown. And as the hill side was covered with wood, which is now almost all cut down, except these trees, it seems as if they were left standing to perpetuate the memory of the Monks' habitation there during the first winter of their residence."

There is something extremely captivating to the imagination in the thought that these venerable trees have witnessed the first rearing of the noble edifice, on whose ruins they seem to look in sympathetic decay. They may be imagined as addressing them—

"O our coevals, remnants of yourselves!"

indeed, every thing connected with them is calculated to awaken the fancy of the poet and the painter, and the reflections of the moralist.

In going from Pately Bridge towards Ripon, about

three miles from the latter place, there is a road across the fields, which leads the pedestrian through a sequestered burial-ground belonging to a small chapel, into a retired and beautifully wooded lane; at the bottom of which he is brought into full view, all at once, of Fountains' Abbey: which by this simple route strikes much more powerfully on the feelings, than when gradually approached by the more formal walks through the pleasure-grounds of Studley. From the moment of beholding these magnificent ruins, the spectator must be rapt in delight; now tracing the remains of the Abbey, its nave, its transept, its cloisters, now turning to enjoy the sweetly solemn effect of the general scene. The Ash and Birch enliven by their foliage the dark masses of shade thrown out by groups of Fir, Larch, and Oak: the cliffs that rise around appear like natural walls, affording a delightful variety of tint, and shaded by ancient trees, whilst the tender saplings spring from between the crevices. Part of the cloisters stretches over the Skell, which murmurs responsive to the scene; the arches cast a deep and dark reflection on the water; whilst about the ruins wave lofty trees, tipped with light foliage, which is also seen peeping in at the narrow pointed windows, as they reflect the light from each other. Opposite to this secluded spot is a small recess in the rocks, by speaking from which a clear echo is returned in a few

seconds, as if it floated along the ruined choirs and vaulted passages of the roofless Abbey. Inexpressibly interesting are these aerial sounds to the imaginative ear! It should seem as if the spirits of the cowled brethren still loved to linger in the haunts so dear to them whilst they were in a state of mortal existence—still loved to keep up a link of association with those who, themselves "warm in life," may have been treading just before on the ashes, which, at the sound of human footsteps, again glowed with their wonted fires. It did indeed seem the voice of past ages,

"Vox et præterea nihil:"

but how eloquent the response which calls up the scenes and actors of so long a train of centuries gone by! It is such thoughts as these that invest the venerable Yew Trees, the silent witnesses of the changes of time, and the decays of nature, with so much interest, and renders their preservation so desirable. They do not, however, appear to be treated with the reverence due to them: a low wall hides their weather-beaten boles on the side whence they would otherwise be seen to the most advantage, and a paltry little stable is erected almost beneath their branches; on which, worst injury of all, the marks of the despoiling axe are but too visible, and the ground underneath is strewed with fragments of

larger limbs, probably torn away for petty purposes, to which meaner wood might have been applied with equal utility.

It is unfortunate for the Yew tree that "the days of chivalry are past." A pure native of Britain, it was formerly that basis of its strength which the oak is now. It was the boast of the old English yeoman, that his long-bow, made from its branches, could be bent by none but an English arm; and we find it mentioned by all our older poets with the respect due to its being associated in their mind with ideas of knightly valour,

> "Of sallies and retires; of trenches, tents,
> Of palisadoes, fortins, parapets;
> Of basilisks, of cannon, culverin,
> Of prisoners' ransom, and of soldiers slain."

But now its "occupation's gone!" the "cannon" and the "culverin" have superseded the arrow's fateful flight, and the Yew, no longer called for in the field of battle, takes peaceful refuge in the library, or the boudoir, under some of the ornamental forms for which it is peculiarly fitted by its susceptibility of polish, and the variegated beauties of its surface.

THE MAPLE.

" ——— Acerque coloribus impar.
The maple, stain'd with various hues."
OVID.

THE small or common Maple is very inferior in size to the Sycamore, or greater Maple; but the timber is much more valuable; and is held in the highest estimation by turners and cabinet-makers, on account of the exquisite beauty of veining which it frequently presents. The wood of the Maple is also much prized for musical instruments, on account of its lightness; and the tree itself yields a sap which upon evaporation will leave sugar as perfect in quality as that of the cane, though inferior in point of quantity. The ancients held the Maple in the greatest esteem; and tables inlaid with curious portions of it, or formed entirely of its wood when finely variegated, fetched prices which, even to the manufacturers of the buhl furniture of modern times, would

appear unconscionable and incredible. Virgil erects his throne for "the good Evander" of Maple, inlaid with ivory: and Pliny gives an elaborate account of its properties and value. The Maple rarely attains any considerable size: "We seldom see it employed," says Gilpin, "in any nobler service than in filling up its part in a hedge in company with thorns, briars, and other ditch trumpery." In this situation its value seems to be judged by the company it keeps, and to whose level it is generally reduced by the indiscriminating bill of the hedger. Nevertheless, when it is spared to attain its full size, it is beautiful in its character, if not dignified; and is capable of being made highly ornamental. "It is the earliest sylvan beau that is weary of its summer suit, first shifting its dress to ochrey shades, then trying a deeper tint, and lastly assuming an orange vest. When first the Maple begins to autumnize the grove, the extremities of the boughs alone change their colour, but all the internal and more sheltered parts still retain their verdure, which gives to the tree the effect of a great depth of shade, and displays advantageously the light lively colouring of the sprays." The constant excoriation of the bark also produces a variety of hues, which render the introduction of it very favourable to effect in landscape.

THE MAPLE IN BOLDRE CHURCH-YARD

is ten feet in circumference at the ground, and at four feet, seven feet six inches; at twelve feet, the trunk divides into branches; and the entire height of the tree is about forty-five feet. This is considered the largest Maple in England, and is mentioned as such by Gilpin.

It is not, however, solely from consideration of its size that it is introduced in these pages, but also from a desire on the part of the author to pay a tribute of well-deserved respect to the memory of so excellent and accomplished a man, as him by whom it has been chronicled; the late Rev. William Gilpin; who, after fulfilling his duties in the most exemplary manner for twenty years, as rector of the parish of Boldre, chose for his last resting-place this sweet sequestered spot, under the very tree he has given interest to by his record of it, and amidst the scenes he so much loved, and so well described: thus realizing the wish of Bloomfield, that favoured, though lowly votary of the rural Muse,

> "O Heaven permit that I may lie
> Where o'er my corse green branches wave;
> And those who from life's tumults fly,
> With kindred feelings press my grave."

Nor can a work professing to illustrate Forest Sce-

Copleat Boldre

nery, and to draw the attention of the reader to the pure and exalted pleasures which a love of nature inspires, conclude the portion of it which belongs to England better than with a tribute of respect to a name so connected with its object, and adorned with so many virtues as that of GILPIN.

Sylva Scotica.

TO

JOHN MAXWELL, ESQ.

OF POLLOC,

MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT FOR THE COUNTY OF RENFREW,

IS RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED,

THE PORTION OF THIS WORK ENTITLED

THE

SYLVA SCOTICA;

WITH THE HOPE THAT IT MAY AT ONCE PERPETUATE THE

REMEMBRANCE OF SOME OF HIS

FAVORITE TREES,

AND THE ESTEEM IN WHICH HIS PATRIOTISM AND

BENEVOLENCE ARE HELD BY

HIS OBLIGED FRIEND AND SERVANT,

THE AUTHOR.

SYLVA SCOTICA.

SCOTLAND is, in every respect, too interesting and too important a portion of Great Britain, to be passed over in any work illustrative of national topography; and though it cannot in the present day be deemed, as it was in former ages, a thickly-wooded country, yet the specimens of Forest Scenery, which it affords in particular districts, are so grand and impressive, and many of the individual trees, of different species, so remarkable, and attended with so many "spirit-stirring" associations, that a much larger portion of this work might have been devoted to the illustration of them, had it not already nearly attained its destined limits; even whilst the author still found subjects of beauty and interest, in every part of the kingdom, continually awakening his admiration; and soliciting, nay, demanding his attention by attractions which he could not have resisted, had he not determined to carry his present undertaking no farther than the boundary he originally prescribed

to it, when he first solicited that encouragement in its support, which he now has gratefully to acknowledge having been favoured with, beyond his most sanguine hopes. Under these circumstances, he trusts, that in devoting the concluding part of the SYLVA BRITANNICA to the trees of North Britain, he shall be considered as paying the tribute of his respect not only generally to

"A country famed for industry and song,"

but also more particularly to those public-spirited noblemen and gentlemen, among the foremost of whom he would reckon him to whom his feelings of admiration and esteem have led him to dedicate this portion of his work, who are daily consulting the interests of posterity by clothing their native hills with rich plantations, and carrying into execution every benevolent and patriotic scheme that can increase the sum of human happiness, and raise man in the scale of intellectual being.

Ancient Caledonia was, as the name implies, almost one vast forest. Many of the bleak moors and mosses which now disfigure the face of the country, and produce only barren heath, were formerly clothed with woods, that furnished useful timber and excellent pasturage. "During the twelfth and thirteenth centuries," says Chalmers, "not only the kings, but the bishops, barons, and abbots, had their forests in every district of North Britain, in which

they reared infinite herds of cattle, horses, and swine. There are in the maps of Scotland, a thousand names of places which are derived from woods which no longer exist on the face of the country; and there are in the Chartularies numerous notices of forests, where not a tree is now to be seen." It would be as easy to trace the causes of the decay of Scottish woods, as it is to prove that they formerly existed: devastating wars, and the improvident and wasteful consumption of wood for fuel, as well for salt works as for domestic purposes, would sufficiently account for the thinning and final extinction of vast tracts of forest land, which when once denuded, the unsettled habits of the country in early times did not allow of restoring by planting. But the object of this work is to preserve individual remains, rather than go into general inquiries: it therefore only remains to remark, that under the spirited exertions of such planters as the Duke of Athol, the Duke of Montrose, Lord Moray, and many others, the hills of Scotland must in time be clad in all their ancient magnificence, with

> "———— trees of various shade,
> Scene behind scene with fair delusive pomp,"

and the country enriched by those generous benefactors who seek no selfish gratification, beyond the conscious pleasure of having performed a disinterested duty.

THE WALLACE OAK.

THERE is perhaps no name in the annals of Scotland more justly celebrated than that of Wallace; one of the bravest of her heroes, and most disinterested of her patriots. Hence his steps are pointed out, wherever they can be traced, with almost religious reverence: the mountain path which he may have tracked, the headlong torrent which he may have crossed, the rugged fastness in which he may have intrenched himself, still bear his name in many parts of the country, and still invite the wanderings and charm the imagination of those who are capable of feeling the force of the sublime sentiment—

"Dulce et decorum est pro patria mori."

Among the memorials to the fame of Wallace which the gratitude of posterity has delighted to point out, the trees under which he is known to have reposed or encamped, have been treated with a degree of attachment which, defeating its aim in its excess, has ultimately caused the destruction of the object it wished to commemorate. Hence the famous Oak in Torwood is no longer remaining. It stood in the middle of a swampy moss, having a causeway round it; but the last fragments of its ruins have been carried off by the pilgrims whom its fame attracted, and only the spot on which it stood

The Wallace Oak

now remains for them to pay their devotions to. Of Earnside Wood, where Wallace defeated the English, on the 12th June, 1298, and which formerly stretched four miles along the shores of the Frith, not a vestige is left; and in the same manner, many other individual trees and woodland tracts, once rendered interesting by being associated with the valiant darings and hair-breadth scapes of Wallace, have bowed before the warring elements, or the unpitying axe. One Oak which bears his name still however survives, and is perhaps more interesting than any of those we may otherwise lament, on account of its standing immediately at the place of his birth, which was Ellerslie, or Elderslee, three miles to the south-west of Paisley, in Renfrewshire. It is mentioned by Semple, in his "Continuation of Crawfurd's History of Renfrewshire," as "the large Oak tree, which is still standing alone, in a little enclosure, a few yards south from the great road between Paisley and Kilbarchan; being on the east side of Elderslee rivulet, where there is a stone bridge with one arch, the manor of Elderslee being a few yards distant from the rivulet on the west side. They say that Sir William Wallace and three hundred of his men hid themselves upon that tree, among the branches, (the tree being then in full blossom,) from the English. The tree is indeed very large, and well spread in the branches, being about twelve feet in circumference." p. 260. 4to. 1782. The pre-

sent dimensions of the Wallace Oak, as communicated by Mr. Macquisten, an accurate land-surveyor, are twenty-one feet in circumference at the ground; and at five feet from it, thirteen feet two inches. It is sixty-seven feet in height, and its branches extend on the east side to forty-five feet, on the west to thirty-six, on the south to thirty, and on the north to twenty-five, covering altogether an extent of nineteen English, or fifteen Scotch poles, land-measure. According to the testimony of aged residents in the neighbourhood, the branches of this tree, about thirty years ago, covered above a Scotch acre of ground; and one old person pointed out a spot on the ancient turnpike road, forty yards north from the trunk of the tree, where he said that, when young, he used to strike the branches with his stilt. The Wallace Oak seems destined, in sharing the fame of others of its brethren, who have been honoured by sheltering the hero Wallace, to share their fate likewise of despoliation: every year its branches pay tribute to its renown, and the western Highlanders, in particular, carry off relics from it in abundance, which threatens extinction, at no very distant period, to the parent stem, unless it be protected from further violence by its present owner, Archibald Spiers, Esq. of Elderslie, M.P. who may not be quite aware of the extent to which ravages are committed upon it through the good feeling, though mistaken judgment, of the majority of its visitants.

THE SYCAMORE

is a species of the Maple: in favourable situations it attains to a considerable stature, and will remain a long time in a state of perfection. Evelyn accuses it of contaminating the walks, wherein it may be planted, with its leaves, which, like those of the Ash, fall early, and putrefy with the first moisture of the season. This great Oracle of the Forests therefore remarks, that with his consent it should be banished from all curious gardens and avenues, though he acknowledges that for more distant plantations it is desirable; particularly where better timber will not prosper so well, as in places near the sea; it being no way injured by the spray, which is so prejudicial to most trees. The frequent allusions to the Sycamore in Holy Writ, show how much it was cultivated in divers parts of Asia. Zaccheus climbed up into a Sycamore-tree to see our Saviour ride in triumph to Jerusalem; and we are told by St. Hierom, who lived in the fourth century after Christ, that he had himself seen this same tree; a sufficient evidence of the length of time which it will stand without decay. It is said of Solomon, among his other meritorious deeds, that "Cedars made he to be as the Sycamore trees that are in the vale, for abundance," 1 Kings x. 27. In

his father David's time, an officer is mentioned as being appointed to superintend "the Olive trees, and the Sycamore trees that were in the low plains," 1 Chron. xxvii. 28. And the royal Psalmist, in recounting the marks of the Almighty's displeasure against the Israelites, includes his destroying "their Sycamore trees with frost." It is probably from associations of this kind that it has been planted more frequently near religious edifices than in other situations.

THE SYCAMORE AT BISHOPTON,

in Renfrewshire, is the property of Sir John Maxwell, Bart. It is a stately spreading tree, twenty feet in circumference at the ground, about sixty feet in height, and contains seven hundred and twenty feet solid timber. It stands on the banks of the Clyde, on the opposite side of which the insulated rock of Dumbarton rises in solitary majesty, crowned with its strong fortress, of little use in "these weak piping times of peace," but once deemed the "Key of Scotland;" and still exciting a melancholy interest as the place where Wallace, that hero dear alike to the sober page of history, and the wilder graces of tradition, was delivered up to his enemies by the treachery of a pretended friend.

The Sycamore was little known in this country, even so late as the 17th century. Chaucer speaks

Sycamore at Bishopton

of it as a rare exotic in the 14th century: Gerard, who wrote in 1597, says, "The great Maple is a stranger in England, only it groweth in the walks and places of pleasure of noblemen, where it especially is planted for the shadowe sake, and under the name of Sycomore tree." And Parkinson, speaking of the same, in 1640, says, "It is no where found wilde, or naturall in our land, that I can learn, but only planted in orchards or walkes, for the shadowe's sake." At present, however, it is to be found in all parts of the kingdom, especially in Scotland, where it grows to a great size, wearing an undaunted aspect, and throwing out its bold arms, as if in defiance of the utmost inclemency of the skies.

Perhaps the largest tree in North Britain is to be found at Kippenross, in Perthshire. Of its age the Earl of Marr communicated the following anecdote to Mr. Monteath, the intelligent author of "The Forester's Guide." "Mr. John Stirling, of Keir, who died in 1757, and made many inquiries of all the old people from eighty to ninety years of age, which takes us back to the reign of Charles II., near the Restoration: they uniformly declared, that they have heard their fathers say that they never remember any thing about it, but that it went by the name of the big tree of Kippenross."

THE WYCH ELMS AT POLLOC.

This graceful group of Wych Elms stands on the banks of the river Cart, at Polloc, in Renfrewshire, just beneath the site of the castle, occupied by the ancestors of Sir John Maxwell, Bart., the present proprietor, since the forfeiture of the Earl of Nithsdale, about the middle of the thirteenth century, chief of the family of Maxwell.

The principal tree in this group is of extraordinary health and vigour, and does not exhibit the slightest appearance of decay; it is completely covered with foliage, and its leaves, instead of being small, as is generally the case in old trees, are large and luxuriant; it still sends forth its tribute of new shoots annually to the spring, and continues to increase both in height and girth. In 1812, it was ten feet ten inches in circumference at five feet from the ground; in 1824, it measured eighteen feet one inch in circumference, at the surface of the ground, and eleven feet ten inches at five feet from the ground: its height is eighty-eight feet, and it contains six hundred and sixty-nine feet of solid timber.

Witch Elms at Buxe.

THE FIR.

Though the Fir will grow in all parts of the kingdom, and is as useful in clothing the barren wolds of Yorkshire as the rugged mountains of Scotland, it perhaps no where attains such perfection as in the latter country; particularly in those situations in the Highlands where it is most exposed to a northern aspect: for in proportion to the tardiness of its vegetation, in consequence of the little influence of the sun upon it for months together, it completes by slow and sure degrees the health and strength of its timber far beyond that which is nurtured to prematurity of stature in richer soils and warmer situations.

This remark may be applied to all other timber trees as well as to the Fir. Pliny observes, that such as grow in moist and sheltered places are not so close, compact, and durable, as those which are more exposed. And Homer, who like Shakspeare had read the book of nature as well as that of humanity, judiciously assigns to Agamemnon a spear formed of a tree which had braved the fury of the tempest: he also puts into the mouth of Didymus the express reason for this choice; "because," says he, "it becomes harder and tougher in proportion as it is weather-beaten."

THE FIR IN DUNMORE WOOD,

Stirlingshire, the property of the Earl of Dunmore, perhaps the largest in the Lowlands of Scotland, is fully as remarkable for its beauty as for its magnitude; affording a very pleasing specimen of the characteristic form of its species. It is sixty-seven feet in height; eleven feet three inches in girth at the ground, and ten feet three inches at seventeen feet from it. The quantity of solid timber which it contains is two hundred and sixty-one feet, leaving out of the measurement all branches below six inches in diameter: its age is not known, though that of the Fir in general may be ascertained by the grain of the wood, which appears distinctly in circles, annually formed from the centre to the fork. "Upon cutting a tree close to the root," says Mr. Farquarson, of Marlee, in a letter to Dr. Hunter of York, "I can venture to point out the exact age, which in these old Firs comes to an amazing number of years. I lately pitched upon a tree of two feet and a half diameter, which is near the size of a planted Fir of fifty years of age; and I counted exactly two hundred and fourteen circles or coats, which makes this natural Fir above four times the age of the planted one."

Notwithstanding the remarks that have been made

Scotch Fir at Dunmore.

on timber in general being valuable in proportion to the length of time it has taken to acquire its perfection, it must be acknowledged that the readiness with which the Fir may be forced to speedy growth is an advantage in many respects. Evelyn mentions one which "did shoot no less than sixty feet in height, in little more than twenty years:" he, therefore, who may be waiting impatiently to see his newly-erected mansion enveloped in the graceful shade and salutary shelter which only stately trees can give, will do well to cultivate

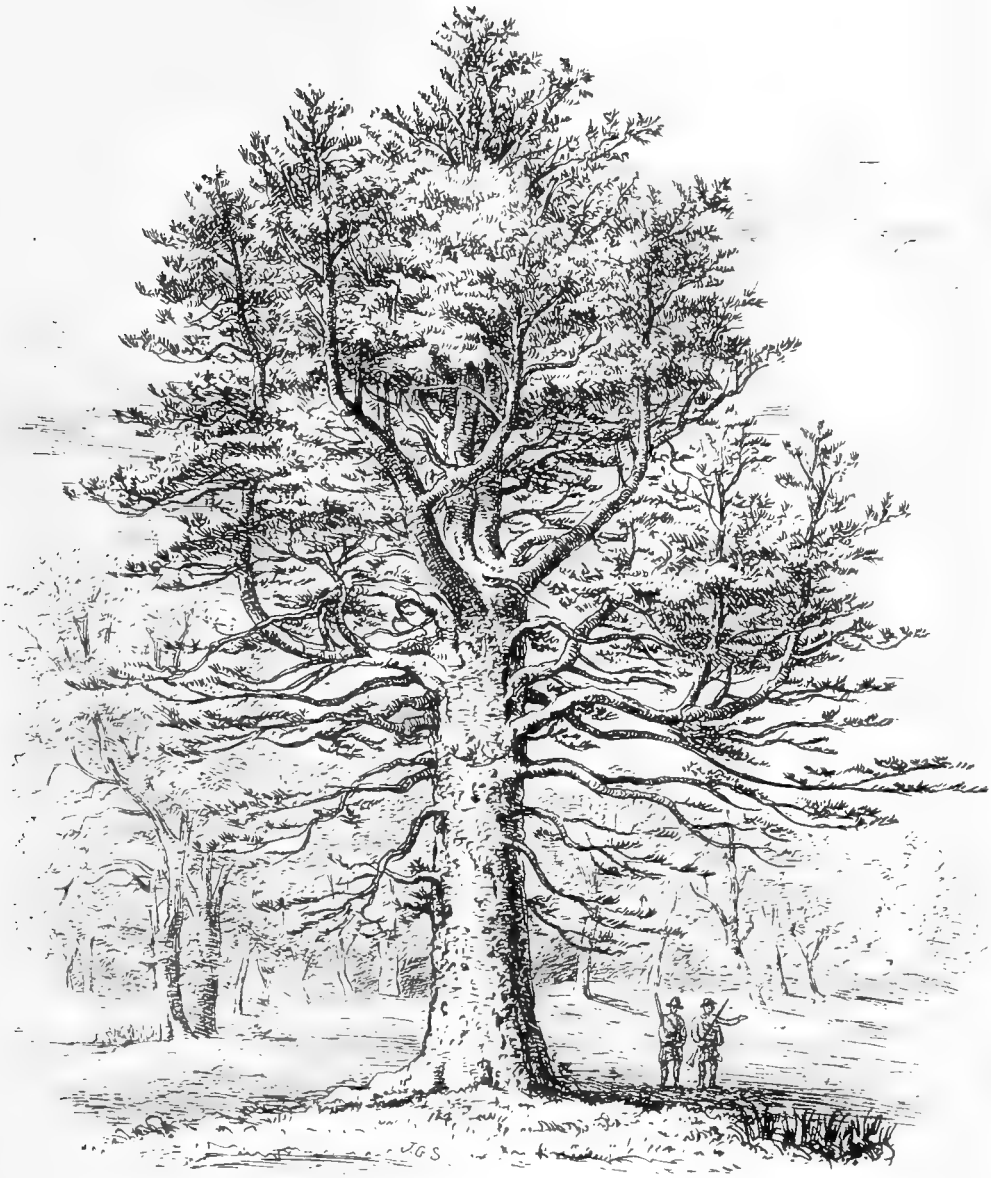
"Cedar, and Pine, and Fir, and branching Palm:"

though even then he must not expect that his avenues will display the dignity of ages afforded by the Oak,—that truly patrician tree, emphatically termed by the Chinese "the tree of inheritance," which testifies so independently to the antiquity of the property which it may adorn. Nobility has been defined "ancient riches;" and assuredly one of the most convincing outward signs of "ancient riches' is *ancient timber;* as proud a badge of distinction to its proprietors as any that can be afforded by blazoned shields or storied urns, and a more desirable one, as allowing others to participate in the enjoyment of it, and inspiring only ideas of tranquillity and usefulness.

THE SILVER FIR AT ROSENEATH.

The Silver Female Fir is the most beauteous and graceful of all its numerous tribe. It is common in the mountainous parts of Scotland, where, as Evelyn justly observes, "are trees of wonderful altitude, which grow upon places so inaccessible and far from the sea, that, as one says, they seem to be planted by God on purpose for nurseries of seed, and monitors to our industry; reserved, with other blessings, to be discovered in our days, amongst the new-invented improvements of husbandry, not known to our southern people of this nation. Did we consider the pains they take to bring them out of the Alps, we should less stick at the difficulty of transporting them from the utmost parts of Scotland."

The Silver Fir represented in the plate, is the property of his Grace the Duke of Argyll. It is about ninety feet in height. In girth it is twenty-two feet four inches at one foot from the ground, and seventeen feet five inches at five feet from the ground. Its solid contents are estimated at six hundred and nineteen cubic feet ten inches; but this calculation is probably only an approximation to the truth. The age of the tree is unknown: the introduction of the Silver Fir into Scotland is however commonly understood to have taken place two hundred and



Silver Fir at Roseneath.

twenty years since, which period corresponds very well with the size of this tree, when compared with others of the same species, the ages of which are known. Evelyn mentions two Silver Firs in Harefield Park, Middlesex, "that being planted there anno 1603, at two years' growth from the seed, are now (1679) become goodly masts. The biggest of them from the ground to the upper bough is eighty-one feet, though forked on the top, which has not a little impeded its growth. The girth or circumference below is thirteen feet, and the length, so far as is timber, that is, to six inches square, seventy-three feet. In the middle seventeen inches square, amounting by calculation to one hundred and forty-six feet of good timber."—*Sylva*, p. 204. edit. 1776.

This quickness of growth is only one of many recommendations in this beautiful species of Fir: but it is one of great importance in regard to planting it in avenues, and near houses; for which it is equally calculated by the graceful stateliness of its form, and the beauty of its foliage, presenting on one side the bright green of the emerald, and on the other a delicate relief of silvery stripes, which, when agitated by the wind, gives it an agreeable variety of appearance.

THE LARCHES AT DUNKELD.

The Larch is a native of the Alps and Apennine mountains, and has not been introduced into this country more than a century. It is of quick growth, and flourishes best in poor soils and exposed situations, which renders it valuable in those places, where land is of little other value than to afford footing for such hardy mountaineers.

The Larches represented in the accompanying plate, are the property of his Grace the Duke of Athol, and are supposed to be the largest in Scotland: they were brought into the country about ninety years since, and were at first placed in a green-house, under the idea that they were tender shrubs. The largest of them was measured in the month of March, 1796, and its dimensions were as follows. At three feet from the ground, ten feet and a half in circumference; at twenty-four feet from the ground, seven feet seven inches; its height eighty-five feet. In July 1825, it was measured again, and at the same distances from the ground; it was found to be thirteen feet, and nine feet five inches in circumference, and had increased in height to ninety-seven feet and a half. These graceful trees are surrounded by objects of the most interesting nature, their branches almost touch the vene-

Larches at Dunkeld

rable remains of the Abbey of Dunkeld, whilst the bleak and barren hill which was once Birnham wood rises behind in the distance, and fills the imagination of the spectator with poetic feeling; with thoughts of Macbeth, and Dunsinane, and of that master spirit who could thus give to airy nothings

A local habitation and a name,

that should make the lapse of centuries appear as moments only—so freshly does all he has ever described rush into the mind, whenever the scenes he has chosen for his actions present themselves to the eye.

With the Thane of Cawdor, the writer of this article might say, whilst he was exploring the beauties of Dunkeld, "So foul and fair a day I have not seen," for it was one of incessant rain, which yet had no power to veil the enchantments of the scene, or to restrain his steps in quest of them; never, indeed, did he find "the wildly devious walk" more delightful than that which he took alone, on the banks of the Tay, by one of the most silent, solemn, and sequestered paths that he had ever trodden. The freshness of the woods, the murmuring of the river, the noble aspect of the hills, presenting new features at every winding of the road, and arrayed in sober purple, or the deepest azure, filled his mind with admiration and delight, undisturbed by any trace of man, except what was here

and there afforded by a solitary corn field, with its sheaves still standing, or a lonely cottage perched at some angle of a rock. As he retraced his steps, the grey tower of the ruined cathedral, bosomed in woods, and overhung by lofty hills purpled with heath, the few houses of the town clustering around it, and the broad river, winding along the valley, with his majestic, though modern bridge, formed a picture which nothing could have prevented him from sketching but the torrents of rain, that would have rendered the sketch illegible; and which nothing could have consoled him for leaving, without even an attempt to fix it, but the hope that he might at some future period revisit it, under circumstances more favorable to the lengthened contemplation of its beauties, which their variety and richness deserved.

THE FORTINGAL YEW

is one of the largest and oldest trees in Scotland: it stands in the Church-yard of Fortingal, or the Fort of the Strangers, so called from its being in the vicinity of a small Roman camp; a wild romantic district lying in the heart of the Grampian Mountains, comprehending Glenlyon and Rannoch, abounding in lakes, rivers, and woods, and formerly inhabited by that lawless tribe of freebooters, who,

The Great Yew at Fortingal.

setting the civil power at defiance in the intricacy of their fastnesses, laid all the surrounding country under that species of contribution so well known at the time it was exacted, by the name of Black-mail.

This prodigious tree was measured by the Hon. Judge Barrington, before the year 1770, and is stated by him to have been at that time fifty-two feet in circumference; but Pennant describes it as measuring fifty-six feet and a half. The same elegant tourist also speaks of it as having formerly been united to the height of three feet; Captain Campbell, of Glenlyon, having assured him that when a boy, he had often climbed over the connecting part. It is now however decayed to the ground, and completely divided into two distinct stems, between which the funeral processions were formerly accustomed to pass. It is impossible to ascertain its age; but judging from its present state and appearance, it is not too much to suppose that its date is contemporary with that of Fingal himself, whose descendants the Highlanders in its vicinity are fond of styling themselves.

THE ASH AT CARNOCK.

This beautifully luxuriant tree—

"—— far spreading his umbrageous arm,"

almost embraces the venerable mansion near which it stands. It is the property of Sir Michael Shaw Stewart, and is supposed to be the largest in Scotland, even when measured at the smallest part of the trunk. Its dimensions in July 1825, at the time that the drawing of it was taken, were as follows:—ninety feet in height; thirty-one feet in circumference at the ground; nineteen feet three inches, at five feet from the ground; and twenty-one feet six inches, at four feet higher up. At ten feet from the ground it divides into three large branches, each of which is ten feet in circumference; and their length is twenty-seven, twenty-eight, and thirty feet. The solid contents of the tree are six hundred and seventy-nine cubic feet. It was planted about the year 1596, by Sir Thomas Nicholson of Carnock, in Stirlingshire, Lord Advocate of Scotland in the reign of James VI. It is at the present period in full vigour and beauty, combining airy grace in the lightness of its foliage and the playful ramifications of its smaller branches, with solidity and strength

Great Ash at Carnock.

in its silvery stem and principal arms. Delightful indeed is it to contemplate the variety and surpassing beauty of many of these "houses not built with hands," proclaiming to the viewless winds, the eyes of heaven, and the heart of man, the wisdom and the love of the Eternal Architect, whose fiat calls them into existence, and whose benevolence wills them to live for ages. Nor is it without regret that the Author sees himself arrived at the end of a task so congenial to his feelings, as that of commemorating some of those silent but happy "inheritors of the earth," to which the shorter-lived habitants of it owe so much both of profit and enjoyment. Nevertheless, he rejoices in the opportunity his work has afforded him, of consecrating to his native country a trophy illustrative of her woodland treasures, her pride, her ornament and defence; a trophy which he would fain offer up to her as expressive of his ardent wishes for the continuance of her prosperity and happiness, and that they may endure and flourish for ages to come, in the full spirit of the Scriptural blessing,—

"As the days of a tree, are the days of my people."

FINIS.

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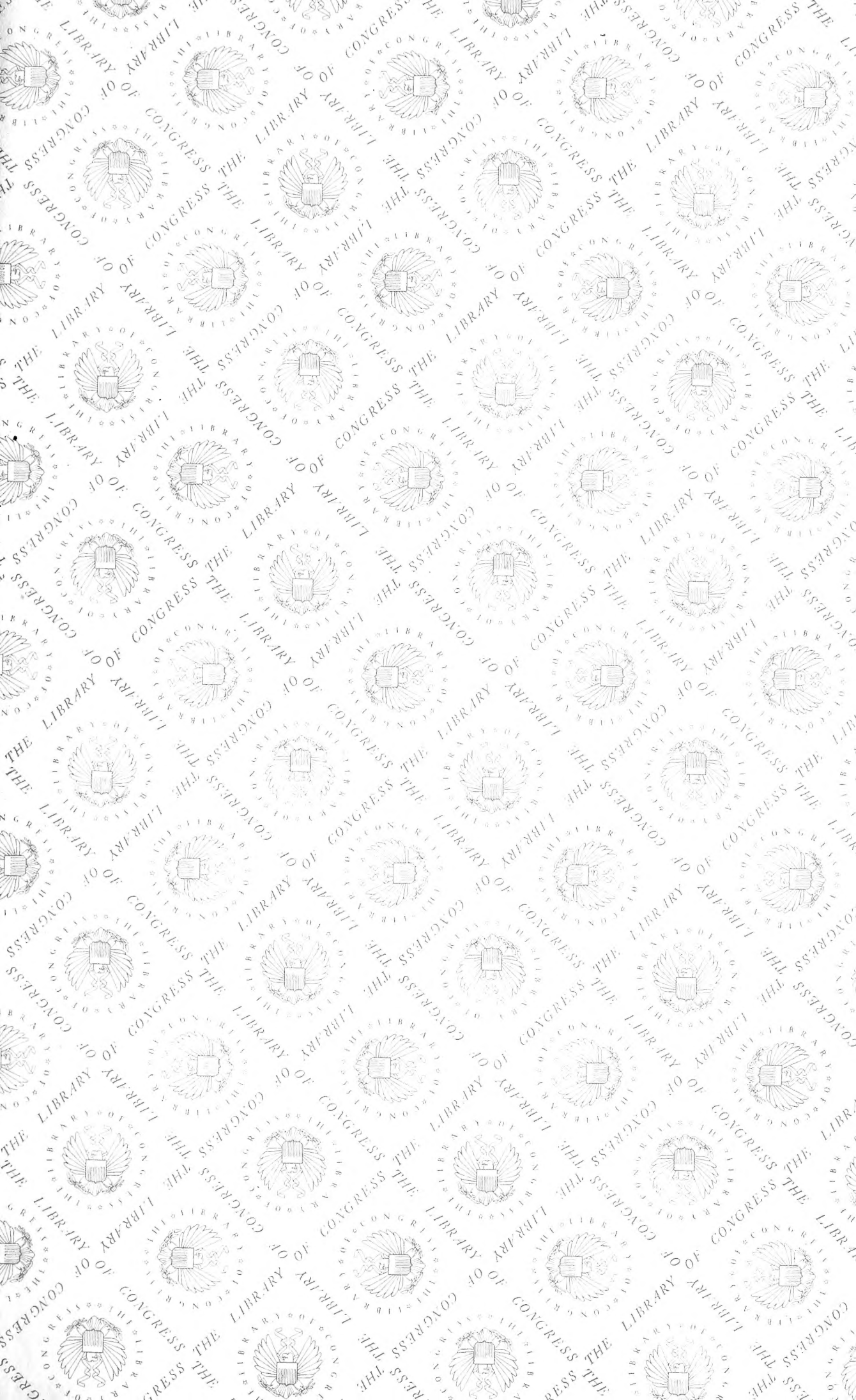
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